

# The Atlantic

*RAW POULTRY: HANDLE WITH CARE / THE OIL-SPILL-CLEANUP MYTH*

## The Case for More SCHOOL DAYS

by  
Michael J.  
Barrett

American  
students are  
falling behind  
their peers  
abroad—maybe  
because they  
get less  
schooling



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**ALTON SMITH** *has always loved cars. He first turned his backyard hobby into a full-time occupation in 1964, when he took a job on the line inspecting brake drums, fittings and gears. He remembers being gung-ho "because the guys depended on you." After nineteen years in the business, Alton talks about being gung-ho again. This time as a tool and die maker, building a brand new car called Saturn in Spring Hill, Tennessee.*

“...My best buddies in high school were twins. A couple of guys named Hugh and Hugo. We all had cars. And every Saturday we'd tear something down and put it back together just for the fun of it. So it's no big surprise that we



all ended up in the car business.

But those guys wouldn't ever believe I just picked up and went to work for a car company that's never built a car before.

Well, what I'm doing now here at Saturn 17 1990 is something completely different.

Here, we don't have management and we don't have labor. We have teams. And we have what you call consensus. Everything's a group decision.

In the last seven months, I've only had a few days off here and there. But this is where I want to be. This is living heaven.

You work through breaks and you work through lunch. You're here all hours and even sometimes Saturdays. And you don't mind. Because no one's making you do it. It's just that here you can build cars the way you know they ought to be built.

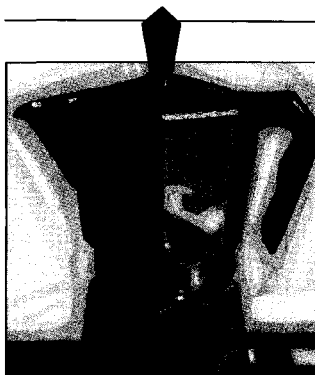


I know the competition's stiff. I was out in California for a family reunion and everything was an import. Hondas, Toyotas. Well, now we're going to give people something else to buy.

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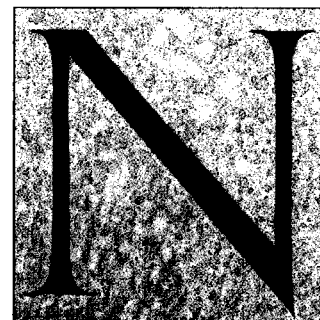
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Many educational reformers have sought to improve the performance of American students by enhancing the "productivity" of every second of classroom time—a frustrating and nearly impossible task of micro-management. There is, the author argues, a better way: we should extend the school year, perhaps by as much as eight weeks.

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# 745 BOYLSTON STREET

EVERY SO OFTEN the poetry editor of *The Atlantic* will notice when looking over the poems in his inventory that a group of them derive from similar experiences or speak on similar themes. The result, once or twice a year, is an anthology of poems that is spread over several pages and defined by an overarching title. We offer one in this issue: an anthology of elegies called "The Art of Losing." As it happens, such evocations acquired a special resonance in our hallways because of the recent deaths of two young *Atlantic* contributors.

Neil Spitzer, who died last summer at the age of thirty-four, from a brain tumor, wrote a variety of pieces for the Reports & Comment section of this magazine. His reporting on the missing-children crusade of the 1980s (June, 1986) was among the first to reveal that the number of children claimed to be missing by various organizations was much exaggerated. Spitzer also produced short essays on such subjects as cycles in nature and people who change their names. And he was a dogged and clever researcher who was equally at home with dense economic data and literary trivia. Asked, once, for some reason, to find out how Winston Churchill and Ferdinand Marcos were known affectionately to their spouses, he went off for an hour or two and then called in: "Pug and Ferdie," he said. "Herbert Hoover, by

the way, was known as Bert. And Michele Duvalier apparently calls Jean-Claude 'Mon Tonton.' Can you believe it?" Spitzer's work for *The Atlantic* was but one facet of a career that included stints as an associate editor of *The Wilson Quarterly* and as the managing editor of *The Washington Quarterly*.

Harvey Oxenhorn, a poet and a journalist of great lyric power, was thirty-eight when he died last spring in an automobile accident. Oxenhorn made his living as the director of the public-policy communications program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, but his abiding interests lay elsewhere: in Scottish poetry, in tall ships, in mystical religion. His first appearance in *The Atlantic* was with a poem, "Ibis." It was published in 1983, just as Oxenhorn began work on *Tuning the Rig*, a book-length account of his voyages in the Arctic aboard the barkentine *Regina Maris*, which was engaged in the study of humpback whales. *The Atlantic* published a portion of the manuscript in September of 1989. The book was published last April.

"It is arrogance to expect that our life always be music," Oxenhorn wrote in *Tuning the Rig*. "It is false pride to demand to know the score. Harmony, like a following breeze at sea, is the exception. In a world where most things wind up broken or lost, our lot is to tack and tune."

—THE EDITORS

## CONTRIBUTORS

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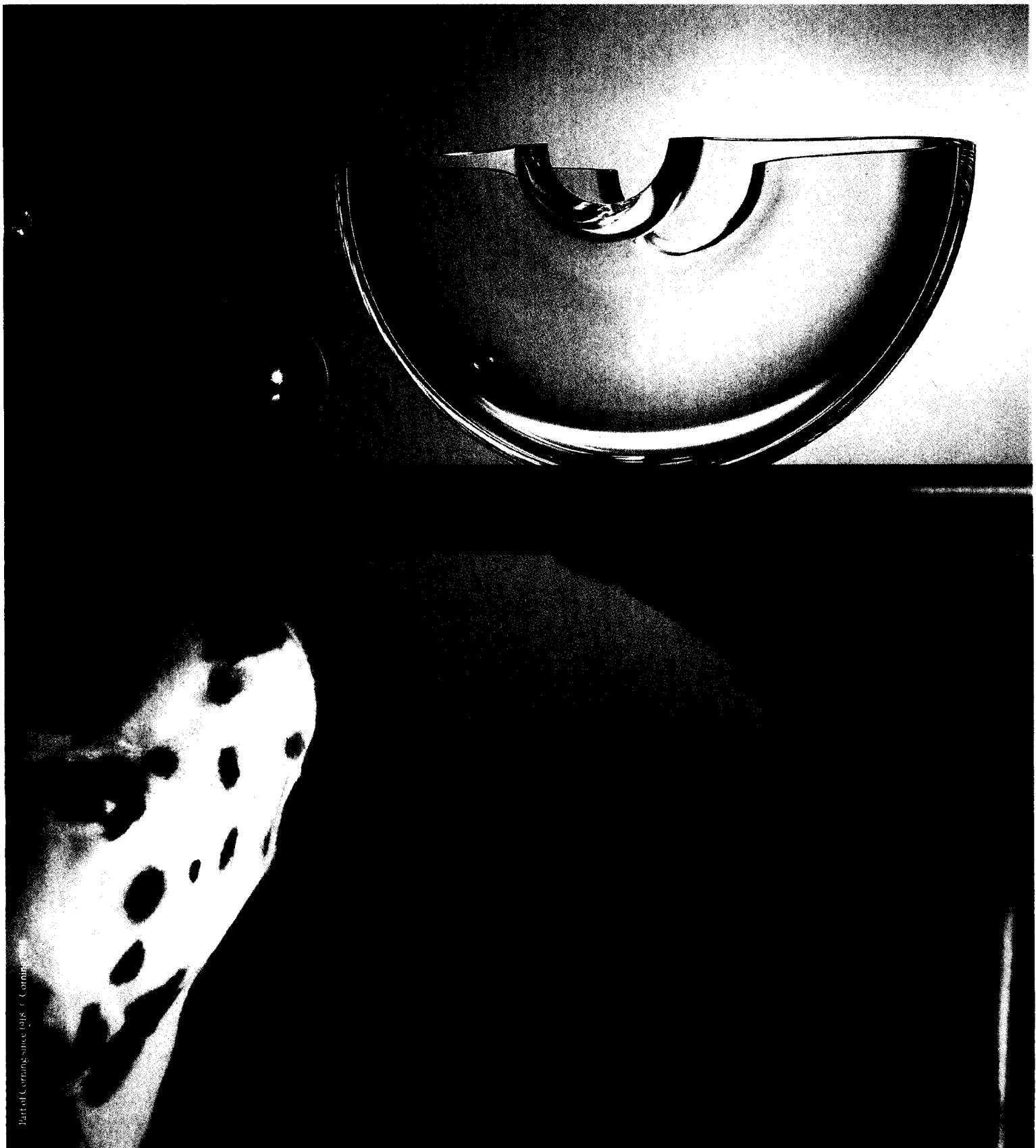
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



### THE COLD WAR RECONSIDERED

In "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War" (August *Atlantic*) John J. Mearsheimer repeats a classical "realist" formulation that states must inevitably fight one another in the unceasing anarchic struggle for power and security. Whether that formulation is accurate or realistic, though, is a question about which observers profoundly disagree. Mearsheimer's recommendations—continued reliance on nuclear weapons and their proliferation and the continued deployment of U.S. and Soviet military forces in Europe—would help to make his prophecy self-fulfilling. It is erroneous and pessimistic to pretend there is no alternative.

He cites the absence of a U.S.-Soviet war as evidence that bipolar international systems are peaceful, but then says his argument must be based chiefly on deduction, because there have been no other bipolar systems since the beginnings of the European state system. He mentions some earlier bipolar systems that were hardly peaceful—Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage—but then dismisses them as part of an incomplete survey and thus only "examples." I applaud any commitment to broad and systematic comparison, but the quick and dirty reference to one example that supports his argument and two that don't hardly makes a good start.

His deductive logic reminds me of the two economists on a desert island, bereft save for some canned goods. Says one, "Assume we have a can opener." Mearsheimer's argument for the peace-enforcing qualities of nuclear weapons assumes a world where "nuclear arsenals are secure from attack, creating an arrangement of mutual assured destruction." Of course, no such security can be assumed; survivable nuclear arsenals, with the command-and-control capabilities needed to ensure that the weapons would be used when they should be—and not

used when they shouldn't—cost hundreds of billions of dollars, and require that stable governments be reliably in charge. Not all current nuclear powers fill the bill, with the consequent risk of catastrophe.

Other assumptions in his deductive structure are not even consistent. Take his argument that deterrence in multipolar systems is unstable because uncertainty about the size and strength of opposing coalitions sometimes leads aggressors to exaggerate their chances for success. Then he says that a big gap in military power between leading states promotes war by increasing an aggressor's prospects for victory. In other words, uncertainty about power relationships makes war likely in the first sentence, and certainty about those relationships makes it likely in the second.

Nationalism in emerging democracies can be a dangerous instrument where state boundaries and ethnic boundaries do not coincide. But nationalism can also discourage conquest by making conquered nations ungovernable by imperial powers. This, as much as the competitive pursuit of power, is a lesson to be drawn from the twentieth century.

Mearsheimer is peddling an academic theory. That's his business—and mine, too. But the market for such wares is the public and policy-makers of the world for the next decade. If we are to operate with "realism" as the dominant interpretation of world politics, it at least deserves the most rigorous evaluation of which we are capable. The shape of the world will depend on which theory we think is true, and how we try to make it come true. International institutions and mutual respect for other peoples' principles of governance are as much a part of that as are nuclear weapons and troops stationed on foreign soil.

BRUCE M. RUSSETT  
*Yale University*  
*New Haven, Conn.*



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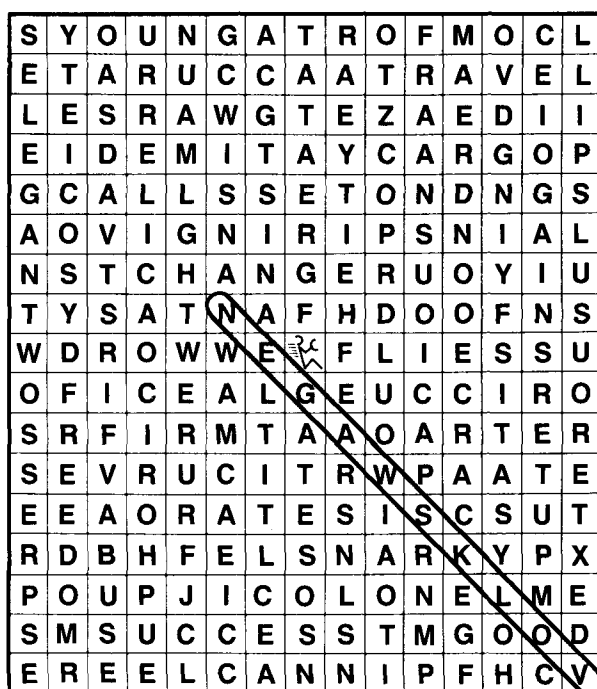


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| Accurate  | Dexterous | Food      | Life       | Success    |
| Agility   | Dream     | Freedom   | Notes      | Time       |
| Calls     | Drug      | Gains     | Pinnacle   | Title      |
| Cargo     | Elegant   | Gate      | Rates      | Travel     |
| Change    | Espresso  | Good      | Review     | Volkswagen |
| Comfort   | Euphoric  | Great     | Satisfying | Wars       |
| Computers | Fantasy   | Holy      | Snarky     | Word       |
| Colonel   | Fear      | Idea      | Society    | Would      |
| Core      | Firm      | Inspiring | Spacious   | Year       |
| Crack     |           |           |            | Young      |

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John J. Mearsheimer asks, "Do democracies really love peace?" and draws the conclusion that democratic nations are "every bit as likely" as autocratic nations to engage in war. A more appropriate question would be "Do capitalists really love peace?" The author believes that a state system's character, and not the character of the individual units in that system, drives nations toward war. If that is true, then he needs to examine the economic character of Western European states and the extent to which *that* character impels them toward war.

Western European nations (and now, perhaps, Eastern European nations, to the extent that they develop free-market economies) are more likely than "autocratic" (socialist) nations to engage in weapons development, owing to the profit motive of the industries within capitalist countries. A nation's democratic, autocratic, or monarchic character is irrelevant when it comes to its propensity toward war. The extent to which a nation's industrial base is motivated toward and rewarded for weapons development is essential to the argument. Industries within capitalist states profit from war; those within socialist states do not.

CHRISTOPHER W. HALL  
Philadelphia, Pa.

In his overview of the prospects for war and peace in Europe, John J. Mearsheimer neglects one factor that may favor a continuing peace: for the first time in modern history most of Europe is approaching a state of demographic stability and zero population growth.

The worst excesses of human mass violence, whether directed externally (German aggression in the first half of this century) or internally (China's Cultural Revolution), tend to occur in societies experiencing rapid population growth. Conversely, nations or regions of low population pressure tend to fight relatively mild wars. This general tendency is amply illustrated in recent European events. In East Germany, the state with the lowest current growth rate (a negative rate by some accounts), a mass exodus of the populace forced a rapid collapse of a firmly authoritarian regime. When people are a limited resource, they can't be "wasted," in any sense of the word; in a low-growth nation the laws of supply and





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demand militate against mass violence. On the other hand, the one Eastern European nation that suffered a violent change of government last year was Romania, the one state with a high rate of population growth. The worst current case of civil unrest in Europe is in the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia, with high population pressure in the Albanian community.

Certainly these situations are much more than demographic, and I do not deny their larger complexities. Still, the general pattern holds. The population explosion in the Third World leaves many people pessimistic about the future of those societies; but the approach of population stability in much of Europe is a very hopeful sign.

MARK DOMINIK  
*Beaverton, Oreg.*

**T**hank you for John J. Mearsheimer's cogent article. It seems to me, however, that he neglected to include two possibilities that could change everything: biological and chemical warfare, the poor nation's nuclear weapons.

JOSEPH H. DEIBERT  
*Birdsboro, Pa.*

**T**oward the end of his essay John J. Mearsheimer makes one of his most perceptive comments when he says: "The teaching of honest national history is especially important, since the teaching of false, chauvinist history is the main vehicle for spreading hyper-nationalism. States that teach a dishonestly self-exculpating or self-glorifying history should be publicly criticized and sanctioned." Perhaps unintentionally, Mearsheimer has just described the single most decisive failure in the teaching of American history in our schools. Most Americans remain sadly unaware of our long history of exploitation of Central and South America. Furthermore, we tend to be appallingly ill informed about the suffering we have caused and the good will we have squandered in Africa and Asia by supporting dictatorships in the name of anticommunism.

Owing largely to the Vietnam War, many Americans in the late sixties and early seventies engaged in the criticism Mearsheimer recommends. The conservative backlash that has since engulfed the country is poignant testimony to the continuing failure of our schools to teach anything but that chau-



vinist and dishonestly self-exculpating history he rightly warns us against.

Since patriotic extremism obscures the seriousness of our mistakes, and the lessons to be learned from them, American history in our schools ought to be not so much taught as constantly debated. Only then will we begin to have a population that can put into practice the advice Mearsheimer so perceptively offers as a safeguard to both democracy and peace.

STEFAN SCHINDLER  
*Arlington, Mass.*

*John J. Mearsheimer replies:*

Although I believe that states constantly compete for power and security, Bruce Russett is wrong to suggest that I argue that "states must inevitably fight one another." After all, I prefer the Cold War precisely because it has not led to a shooting war. There is some chance that a warning about trouble in post-Cold War Europe will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, a greater danger is that states will simply bury their heads in the sand when facing these unpleasant realities, thus guaranteeing trouble in Europe.

I agree with Russett's views on the risks of nuclear proliferation. This is why I call for limiting nuclear proliferation to Germany and, if that fails, ensuring that all nuclear powers have secure retaliatory forces. His claim that my assumptions about power relationships are inconsistent is wrong. I maintain that the perception of power imbalances can cause war. States can perceive a real imbalance and seize the opportunity it presents, or uncertainty can lead states to see an imbalance where none exists, and attack for that reason. Finally, looking at the sweep of European history, why should anyone believe that international institutions and respect for other states' governing principles are a sound basis for peace?

History does not support Christopher Hall's claim that capitalists prefer war to peace because they profit more from war than from peace. Few European capitalists came out of either world war with their pockets bulging and an itch to fight again. Also, war was commonplace in Europe long before the arrival of capitalism. Finally, the Soviet "military-industrial complex" has been as greedy and well fed as any capitalist military establishment, and neither more nor less bellicose.

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Mark Dominik makes a good point about population growth and the prospects for war, although we do not have a well-developed understanding of this linkage. It is worth noting, however, that zero or negative population growth is likely to stimulate immigration, creating more-heterogeneous societies in Europe. In this age of nationalism, heterogeneity tends to breed trouble.

Chemical weapons were used for the first time in the First World War and they did not alter the subsequent course of history. Biological weapons might very well be as horrendous as nuclear weapons, but if so, does Joseph Deibert believe it would matter which type of weapon a state possessed? Assuming they were equally destructive, their effects on stability would be identical.

Stefan Schindler makes wise observations about teaching chauvinistic history, although he worries too much about the American case. The real danger areas are Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan.

## ARMY WOMEN

I read with great interest Charles Moskos's article "Army Women" (August *Atlantic*). The issue of the suitability of women for combat strikes close to me because of my own career.

As a firefighter, I have been in combat. My battleground is house fires and chemical spills. We have battalion chiefs and lieutenants, and they send me with seventy pounds of gear into temperatures that can melt your helmet. These are skirmishes against death in every town and city, and I have free rein to work my way up the promotional ladder to lead in combat someday.

I feel for my colleagues in the Armed Forces. Combat deployment of female soldiers is the litmus test measuring the extent of opportunities for women in uniform. It is simplistic to deny individuals on the basis of gender the opportunity to serve their country to the utmost. As for combat liability for all women in the Armed Forces: all noncivilian personnel in my fire department, from headquarters on down, are liable to grab a hose line and so forth during a very large incident. That is our primary reason for existence as a department. Effectiveness of these in-

dividuals would vary greatly, with differences not predetermined by gender.

CATHLEEN C. CODY  
*Amissville, Va.*

Although Charles Moskos covers many issues, he seems to assume that the primary reasons for excluding women from combat stem from questions regarding their fitness, the overall workability of units that include them, and whether or not the combat deaths of women might cause "much more upset at home." He leaves out what I have understood to be the main reason that women were eventually removed from front-line combat roles in the Israeli army: when taken prisoner, female soldiers were generally raped, by their immediate captors and by numerous guards, administrators, and others during their confinement. Forced prostitution of female captives was also practiced. I suspect that this prospect is even more disturbing to policy-makers than "mere" combat death.

JOEL S. DAVIS  
*Albuquerque, N.M.*

The most vivid image in "Army Women" is that of the helicopter pilot who was denied a flight assignment during the Panama invasion. She had trained for nine years to do a particular job, but when the time came for that job to be done, she was left out of the action, apparently solely because she is female. Anyone who takes pride in himself or herself as a professional, in whatever field, can well understand her anger at that moment and her sense that this was "the ultimate slam."

One of the sources of the taboo against placing women in combat is a simplistic but widely cherished notion of chivalry, with its depiction of the male as the brave hero-protector and of the female as the passive damsel in distress. In this view, facing danger in combat is a rite of manhood, and its ritual significance would be lost if women were permitted to share it.

There is a hard irony in appealing to a sense of chivalry to justify preventing female professional soldiers from doing the very thing that soldiers do. The essential meaning of chivalry lies in the ideal of the gentleman, and it is inherent in that ideal that a gentleman avoids doing that which is cruel. Keeping that pilot on the ground under

those circumstances was an act of cruelty. It is the result not of chivalry but of machismo, for no gentleman would inflict such a gratuitous insult on anyone, male or female.

DEWITT ALLRED  
*Bay St. Louis, Miss.*

It was impossible to sympathize with the downtrodden Army women in Charles Moskos's article. After all, for decades women in corporate and political organizations have been fighting similar battles against sexism and male chauvinism. We've chosen career success over family, and been thought sleazy when we've tried to fit in with male peers. We've been called "skirts" and "bitches" for working circles around male counterparts, and been paid less for it. I trust Moskos's article was not intended as news.

CONSTANCE J. PARRISH  
*Shelbyville, Ky.*

### Charles Moskos replies:

These letters raise important points, though none causes me to modify my conclusions. I have no doubt that Cathleen Cody is an effective firefighter, but to equate her job with that of an infantryman displays a certain naiveté. Constance Parrish correctly notes parallels between the sexism encountered by women in the corporate and political worlds and that in the military (though I trust she knows the difference between real combat and that encountered in the boardroom or on the campaign trail). DeWitt Allred is on the mark when he states that it is false chivalry to remove women from assignments for which they have been trained, even when those assignments entail the risk of life, limb, or capture (*pace* Joel Davis). But all this begs the question of whether women who now join the military, or who are perhaps drafted at some future time, should be compelled to go into combat.

## ALCOHOLISM AS A DISEASE

Re "Second Thoughts About a Gene for Alcoholism," by Stanton Peele (August *Atlantic*): I was shocked that a psychologist, presumably trained to evaluate statistical data, would state, "In fact a majority of children of alcoholics do not become alcoholic themselves. . . . No epidemiologic study

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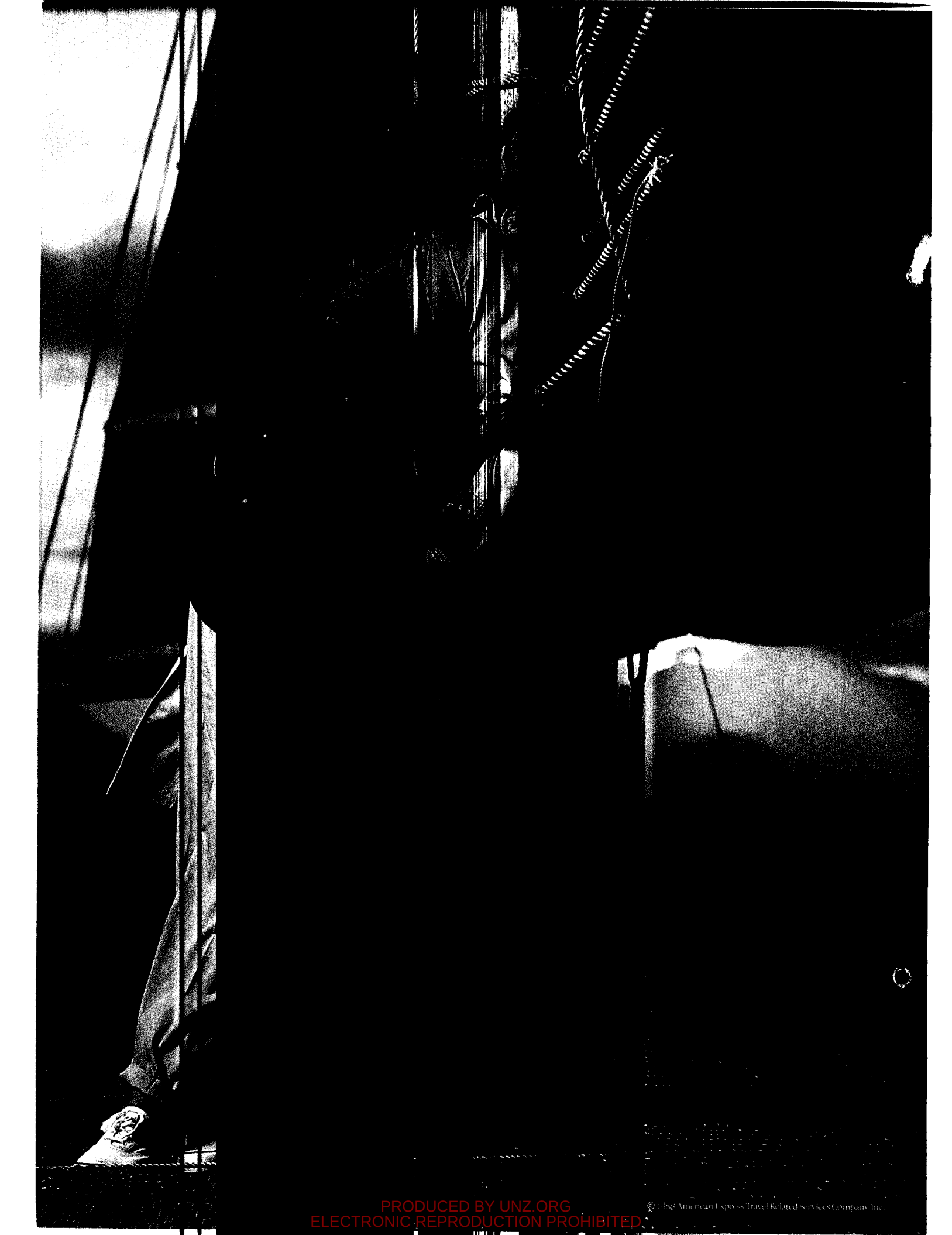
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has ever found that as many as half of such children develop a drinking problem. . . ." To assert, twice in as many sentences, that the incidence of alcoholism among children of alcoholics is below 50 percent is inane if not deliberately misleading. The point of statistical correlation is not that the "majority" of the offspring of alcoholics become alcoholic, or that the majority of smokers get cancer; the point is that a significantly greater number succumb in a select group than in a matched population. In fact, offspring of alcoholics become alcoholic far more often than the general population, whether they are raised by alcoholics or not. The same holds for schizophrenics and manic-depressives. The fact that no one has identified the gene or genes responsible does not refute this data.

NICK WATTERS  
*Chicago, Ill.*

**S**tannton Peele misrepresents the views of Alcoholics Anonymous when he states that AA and others involved in the treatment of alcoholism "have for a long time insisted that alcoholism is an inherited disease." Although the founders of AA believed that alcoholism was a disease, they did not claim that it was or was not inherited. Furthermore, as far as I know, AA has never stated an official position or supported one viewpoint over another with regard to the ongoing controversy.

The author alleges that most of the people who manage America's 4,600 private alcohol-treatment programs have long "insisted" that alcoholism is an inherited disease. In the many articles I have read by people in this field, some have noted how often alcoholics seem to have alcoholic parents. Some have speculated that in some cases a genetic predisposition, in combination with environmental factors, may result in alcoholism. I seriously doubt, however, that most people in the treatment field "insist" that alcoholism is an inherited disease.

WILLIAM BARRY  
*Brunswick, Maine*

**T**hank you, Stannton Peele, for a perfectly sensible criticism of the alcoholism-as-a-disease theory.

I was once told by an alcoholism counselor that "alcoholism is a disease just as sure as cancer is a disease." It

seems to me that if this were so, then I should have the same sympathy for a person who gets drunk and kills twenty-four innocent children on a school bus as I would have for a person with brain cancer who kills twenty-four people from a roof with a rifle.

Another implication of this theory (which is accepted and promoted by the state of New York) is that alcoholics should not be held responsible for their alcohol-induced behavior, since they are in the grip of an uncontrollable disease. Why is it that New York holds a person responsible in court and takes thousands of dollars away from him, and then turns around and sends that person to a place that tells him that he was not to blame in the first place? All driving-while-intoxicated cases are handled in this manner.

I don't advocate driving while intoxicated, but it seems to me that a person who drinks, drives, and kills should be punished more severely than one who only drinks and drives.

GREGORY MOORE  
*Amsterdam, N.Y.*

**I**would like to compliment you on your article by Stannton Peele. During six years of working in traditional disease-model treatment settings, I was unable to find any supporting evidence for the concept. What I did find was a hodgepodge of beliefs about what compulsive-addictive behavior is. For several of those years I used myself as a test. I would describe my drinking behaviors and would be "diagnosed" as an alcoholic. I would then ask why it was I could still drink and had not been intoxicated for fifteen years. Naturally there was a scramble to reverse the diagnosis.

For the past three years my wife (a chronic user for ten years who moderated) and I have been working with drug users from a family-systems perspective. We never mention the word "disease" or any of the other catchwords so commonly used by the industry. We do not require AA attendance. It's not that we are against AA, but we often find other types of support groups to be of more use. We have been successful enough that the state chemical-dependency division co-sponsors our training of other professionals. Interestingly enough, at a recent training thirty-five professionals were unable to agree on a definition of an alcoholic.

Much of what we do in our program is based on six years of asking clients why the program wasn't working for them. Instead of blaming them for their lack of sobriety, we thought there might be something wrong with the program. We learned a lot. The national recovery rate (abstinence) is about seven to ten percent at the end of four years, so we found a lot of people to talk to. We also found a lot of "alcoholics" like us, who were successfully using at a very comfortable level.

There is a wealth of evidence that the process is not progressive for the majority of users, and that it is reversible. In fact, the originator of the concept, Jellinek, stated so on numerous occasions. But, then, in my nine years in the field, I have yet to meet a treatment professional who has read Jellinek's pioneering work.

ZEKE PUTNAM  
*Burnsville, Minn.*

**S**eeing Stannton Peele and the other agents of denial of alcohol addiction gaining recognition in the national media is like watching the lunatics trying to take over the asylum.

JAMES R. MILAM  
Author of *Under the Influence*  
*Kirkland, Wash.*

#### *Stannton Peele replies:*

Nick Watters takes me to task for denying the genetic basis of alcoholism, while William Barry argues that AA and treatment personnel do not claim alcoholism is genetic. Barry's arguments notwithstanding, the standard wisdom underlying treatment in the United States today is that alcoholism is an inherited disease, and most well-informed Americans believe that the gene that causes alcoholism has been identified, like the microbe that causes tuberculosis.

It is refreshing, therefore, to see Zeke Putnam's rejection of the disease theory of alcoholism and of the conversion-experience therapy that composes most treatment. His personal experience, like that of most people who don't buy into conventional treatment, is that the disease model is all show and no substance (for which experience he and others are accused of "denial"). I also appreciate Gregory Moore's common-sense call for people to accept responsibility for their misbehavior, rather than blaming it on a disease.

# ARTS

November-December 1990



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# FILM

by Ella Taylor

## Winning independents

Industry word is that times are hard for independent filmmakers and distributors—but as yet there has been no shortage of interesting indies in 1990. In the English-language releases scheduled for November and December, Brits are writ large, though mostly in American productions, which speaks volumes about the state of the British film industry. Ken Loach, who was one of the angry young men of British film and television in the 1960s, directs Hemdale's *Hidden Agenda*, a fact-based political thriller that has generated all kinds of discomfort in England, about the mysterious shooting of an American lawyer by British troops in Northern Ireland. *The Grifters*, a psychological thriller about Los Angeles con artists (starring John Cusack and Anjelica Huston), joins the growing pile of films based on Jim Thompson's novels of despair; it promises well because it's directed by Stephen Frears (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Dangerous Liaisons*) and is the first film from Martin Scorsese's new production company. Tom Stoppard directs Cinecom's film adaptation of his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, starring Gary Oldman and Tim Roth as Hamlet's befuddled chums and an impeccably accented Richard Dreyfuss as the Player King. Robert Altman's *Vincent and Theo* is a surprisingly classical, wonderfully low-key examination of the relationship between Van Gogh (Tim Roth) and the brother who supported him.

## Films that came in from the Cold War



**Taxi Blues**

Foreign-language films (unless they're dubbed, or crowd-pleasers like the sweet but schmaltzy *Cinema Paradiso*) have enormous difficulty finding distributors in this country. At best they flit by in film festivals or three-day runs in art houses. To judge by recent festivals in Toronto, Los Angeles, and Seattle, the seismic changes in Europe are going to shake the film worlds of both East and West. East European filmmakers have every reason to feel exultant not only about the growth of artistic freedom in their countries but about the possibilities for co-production and financing from the West. (They also have reason to fear being ousted from the box office by a flood of Hollywood movies, not to mention the "Hollywoodization" of their films through the influx of American capital.) Among those artists whose films have been picked up for distribu-

tion here is Russian director Pavel Lounguine, who won the award for best director at this year's Cannes Film Festival for his first feature, *Taxi Blues*, a Franco-Soviet collaboration released by Marin Karmitz. This hyperactive but riveting film, about an explosively ambivalent relationship between a brutal yet vulnerable Moscow cab driver and an alcoholic, intellectual Jewish saxophonist, will undo any preconceptions about lumbering social realism in Soviet film.

## The big picture

Studio offerings tend to become more dreadfully formulaic as they approach the holidays, and this year's movies display the usual range of Hollywood's unique brand of repetition-compulsion: *Predator 2*; *The Godfather, Part III*; *Rocky V*; *Look Who's Talking Too*. But there are some more up-market new releases to look forward to. In November, Warner brings us Debra Winger and John Malkovich in Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Sheltering Sky*, based on the novel by Paul Bowles. December brings Fred Schepisi's *The Russia House* (MGM/UA), starring Sean Connery and Michelle Pfeiffer, based on John Le Carré's latest espionage novel, set in post-*glasnost*



**Bonfire of the Vanities**

Moscow. For Warner, Brian De Palma directs the film version of Tom Wolfe's best-selling novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*; Tom Hanks is the Wall Street broker whose life falls apart.

But your ultimate holiday treat may be a double dose of Woody Allen. In what's either an inspired casting choice or a pairing from hell, Allen stars with Bette Midler in Touchstone Pictures' *Scenes From a Mall*, directed by Paul Mazursky, about a couple celebrating their fifteenth anniversary with an orgy of jealousy. Orion's *Alice*, directed by Allen with some of the usual suspects and a few new ones, concerns a wife's experience at a critical juncture in her life. (Nobody gets to know more than this about a Woody Allen movie before it opens.)

## Homing in

And if you won't go out once winter sets in, here's a short, idiosyncratic list of video-rental picks from *Variety's* Top 50, beginning with yet another Woody Allen film, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, a gorgeously made, wonderfully acted movie that's funny, intellectually absorbing—and doesn't bear a great deal of ethical scrutiny. Michael Moore's "docucomedy" *Roger and Me* tends to disparage the displaced GM workers whose plight it means to illuminate, but it's one of the sprightliest, funniest pieces of agitprop I've seen. Though *My Left Foot* is a rather manipulative and sentimentalized high-tone TV-movie, it's worth seeing for Daniel Day Lewis's stunning performance as the cerebral-palsied Irish writer Christy Brown. *Drugstore Cowboy*, directed by Gus Van Sant and starring Matt Dillon as an ineffectual Portland junkie in the early 1970s, is probably the least sentimental film ever made about drug culture—arguably the best film of 1989, with the added bonus of that wily old gnome William Burroughs in a cameo role as a defrocked junkie priest.

DAVID JAMES

# MUSIC

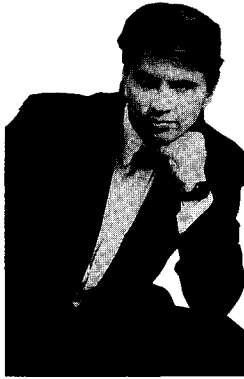
by Matthew Gurewitsch and Milo Miles

## Vocal hero

**N**o category of musician calls forth more extravagant loves and antagonisms than singers. The appeal of a voice is so unaccountable, so primal, that explanations explain nothing, really. The voice speaks to us, or it does not.

One voice that has spoken to countless listeners with uncommon eloquence of late belongs to the twenty-seven-year-old Siberian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky. His is a luxurious instrument, noble and commanding, deployed with extraordinary freedom. His breath control is extraordinary, too. There is in his singing an innate sense of drama that makes each work "feel" significant whether or not one understands the languages (Russian and Italian, chiefly).

His breakthrough came last year, in June, with his victory at the BBC Singer of the World competition, in Cardiff. Concerts in Amsterdam, London, New York, Washington, Tokyo, and else-



**Dmitri Hvorostovsky**

where have followed, and his first recording (Philips), of Verdi and Tchaikovsky arias, has brought him to the notice of music-lovers everywhere. On November 4, he returns to New York for his Carnegie Hall debut, in a recital with piano; for tickets call 212-247-7800. On November 11, he joins an all-star lineup for the Richard Tucker Foundation gala at Avery Fisher Hall; for tickets call 212-874-6770.

Great things are foretold for Hvorostovsky, and no wonder. The talent and the artistry are phenomenal. Now everything depends on judgment and fortune.

—M.G.

## A Finnish beginning

**A**mong recent appointments on the American concert scene, few hold more promise than that of Esa-Pekka Salonen, thirty-two, as music director designate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. A composer as well as a conductor, Salonen hails from Finland, where contemporary music meets with much keener general interest than it does in most other places. Many new composers are active, and their music is played. Thus Finland, with a population of a mere five million, has a musical culture far more vital and deep-rooted than do nations many times its size. In Salonen, Los Angeles has an artist whose own creativity and attention to that of his contemporaries enhance his interpretive powers throughout the symphonic repertory.

On November 1 through 4, in his first appearances of the season, Salonen offers a mixed program of French and Finnish music, including the American premiere of *Du Cristal*, by Kaija Saariaho. Saariaho's work to date combines state-of-the-art (one might say modish) computerizations with an idiosyncratic urge to make sound spatial, visual. Who knows? Opening new horizons, Salonen

could foster in Los Angeles the sort of rich musical climate he knows from home.

For tickets call 213-972-7211.

—M.G.

## On record

**H**erbert von Karajan staked his final claim to immortality on a videodisc library of the classical symphonic repertory. This month, Sony Classical issues the first of some forty releases.

New recordings of *Così fan tutte* and *The Magic Flute* (Philips) feature the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields led by Sir Neville Marriner—forces of scant operatic experience, but meticulous Mozartians all.

Well past retirement age, bandleader Sun Ra may be setting, but on *Purple Night* (A&M) he gives off an expansive, golden glow. Enjoy more than ten dulcet minutes of "Stars Fell on Alabama."

On *Rootless Cosmopolitans* (Island), nimble guitarist Marc Ribot and a half-dozen New York cohorts carom through experimental, sometimes witty combinations of jazz and rock.

—M.G. and M.M.

## Rock of ageless

**A**merican popular music, once a field dominated by fast-flaming youth, has become one in which slow and steady elders often carry the day. It's routine for established stars from the past couple of decades to rake in recession-proof profits, and recently, wind-falls have come to worthy contenders who had seemed to be sidelined.

Earlier this year, seasoned rhythm-and-blues vocalist Aaron Neville got a boost from a Grammy for his hit duet with Linda Ronstadt, "Don't Know Much," and a more unlikely second award for *Yellow Moon*, an album made with his brothers Art, Cyril, and Charles. With careers stretching back to the late 1950s, Aaron and keyboardist and singer Art have been pillars of African-American music in New Orleans. *Yellow Moon* was the most intricate and far-reaching work the Neville Brothers had ever made, a compendium of social consciousness and sensuality. Their recent follow-up album, *Brother's Keeper* (A&M), outshines even *Moon*.



**Neville Brothers**

Although it features melting lovers' ballads ("Fearless") and simple, chugging oldies ("Mystery Train"), *Brother's Keeper* is at base a staunchly liberal-activist crusade. The Nevilles' pointed lyrics about racial tension and rising poverty fall between the hollow platitudes and the take-no-prisoners rage that so polarize current African-American pop. Aaron's delicate readings of his own reggae "Steer Me Right" and Leonard Cohen's "Bird on a Wire" reflect both his heightened interest in gospel and the undimmed clarity of his voice, like a choir-boy with a crucial transfusion of soul fervor. Linda Ronstadt is producing a solo album for Aaron, due out this spring, with less political content than *Brother's Keeper* and more devotion to his sacred and romantic material.

—M.M.



# THEATER

by Matthew Gurewitsch

## What price glory?

**A**fter a long run in New York, Terrence McNally's *The Lisbon Traviata*—which takes its title from Verdi, its conversational material from the lobby of the Metropolitan, and its climax verbatim from *Carmen*—is enjoying its first West Coast production, moving this month to the Mark Taper Forum, in Los Angeles (November 29 to December 30; previews start November 17), from the Marine's Memorial Theatre, in San Francisco. Are we witnessing the birth of an American classic? Many factors suggest it, not least the presence of Richard Thomas, teen idol turned classical actor, as Stephen, the central character.

But the play now on view is not quite the play McNally first wrote, and it is worth inquiring what price the playwright has paid for success. At issue here—as in so famous a precedent as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*—is the ending. McNally, whose theme is the crackup of a homosexual marriage, can frankly name desires that Tennessee Williams had to put into code. Yet McNally seems to have been no freer than Williams to tell the audience his dramatic truth as darkly as he conceived it.

As *Cat* was doctored for Broadway, it was possible to believe that Maggie the



*The Lisbon Traviata*

Cat had won her husband back from the specter of the dead man he loved more than he loved her, though in the original script this clearly was not so. In *The Lisbon Traviata* as presented for a while in New York, Stephen killed his lover rather than let him go, and cradled him in his arms as he bled to death. This denouement was a shocker and after the comic razzle of the first act, it was hard for certain critics to accept. McNally has protested: "It is clearly not a well-made play in which the first act prepares us for everything that happens in the second. Yesterday did not prepare me for what happened today. Life is a lousy playwright that way." Nevertheless, in the script published, Stephen flinches—and the lover gets away.

The whirligig of time, of course, brings its revenges. When *Cat* returned to Broadway last season with Kathleen Turner, the old ending was restored. Maybe the day will come for the more violent—more *operatic*—*Lisbon Traviata*. One can but hope. Meanwhile, we may ponder the wisdom of Williams: "A failure," he wrote, bowing to necessity, "reaches fewer people, and touches fewer, than does a play that succeeds."

For tickets call 213-410-1062.

## Whose town?

**T**o the extent that *Our Town* ever mirrored our country, fifty years and more later it does no longer. Yet while Norman Rockwell's America has slunk to the twilight zone of unsustainable fictions, Wilder's town of Grover's Corners endures, honored, indeed beloved, from sea to shining sea and around the world.

"*Our Town*," Thornton Wilder once wrote of his play, "is not offered as a picture of life in a New Hampshire village.... It is an attempt to find a value beyond all price for the smallest events in our daily life...."

Cheap to stage, hard to muff (com-

pletely), Wilder's gospel has been heard for decades in high-school auditoriums and community centers. It has been broadcast on television, cast with stars. The place where it has become rare is the professional stage. But a few seasons back, in association with Lincoln Center, Greg Mosher gave the play a somber Broadway production that put certain critics in mind of none other than Samuel Beckett. This month, *Our Town* opens in Washington, D.C., at the Arena Stage (November 15 to December 30). Douglas Wager, the artistic director designate, directs. Expect a kinder, gentler show than Mosher's, a clear, fresh look at traditions well worth cherishing.

For tickets call 202-488-3300.

## A shot at greatness

**M**any arbiters of theatrical fashion wish to believe that Stephen Sondheim is a genius, and they may be right. Certainly the mind that could propose Sweeney Todd and Mrs. Lovett, Georges Seurat and Dot, Little Red Riding Hood and Jack of the Beanstalk as Broadway leads and then get audiences to come—certainly this mind has some power that is exceptional. All the same, to producers and audiences the prospect of a new Sondheim venture always spells anxiety, never just good times, and for a reason. Hit or miss, his pieces sting.

The latest of them, which goes into off-Broadway previews in the not-for-profit shoebox theater of Playwrights Horizons on December 18, looks to be Sondheim's most nervous-making project yet. *Assassins* it is called, and its subject is the long roll call of men and women who have attempted, with or without success, to kill presidents of the United States.

A turnoff? Not for everyone, apparently. For a staged reading last December, Sondheim had no trouble lining up the star director Jerry Zaks (currently represented by John Guare's ballyhooed *Six Degrees of Separation*) and a who's-who cast, including Swoosie Kurtz and Michael Jeter.

"It was like a review," recalls one of the actors, "in short scenes, with all the characters intermingling. Because of who the characters were—John Wilkes Booth, Lee Harvey Oswald, John Hinckley, Squeaky Fromme—people's emotions were piqued instantly. Sondheim has an extraordinary slant on things. You feel a connection with these people though you shouldn't and don't want to. It's the dark side of the American dream."

Even if no one on the inside will come out and say so, the Playwrights Horizons run is plainly meant to test the climate—and create demand—for a full-scale commercial production. "They're worried," admits our alumnus, "about how to build an audience." (Don't "they" remember *The Producers*?)

For tickets call 212-279-4200.



Stephen Sondheim



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## DANCE

by Laura Jacobs

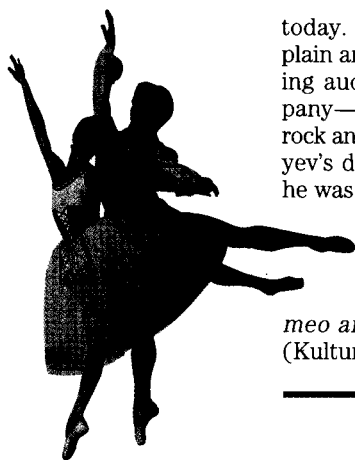
*The Soviets are coming*

Currently touring America's heartland, the Kirov Ballet will make stops in Iowa City, Lincoln, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Cleveland, and Detroit. This company may be the only Soviet troupe left that has something to teach us about classical dance: it has made a metaphor of its

Iron Curtain isolation. If the Bolshoi, which toured the U.S. this summer, looked quaint and compromised by its lack of exposure to Western trends, Kirov dancing speaks of hard-won wisdom and stone-smooth rote, frightening solitude and pride of place, conscious glamour and duty fulfilled. And the Kirov continues to produce great women. Witness the Athena-like size and sweep of Yulia Makhalina, the comet's-tail speed of Yelena Pankova, the girlishly engaged dancing of rosy Zhanna Ayupova.

An important dimension of Russian ballet has been alive and well and living in America—in the dancing of Kirov defectors Nureyev, Makarova, Baryshnikov; in the New York City Ballet repertory of Kirov-trained George Balanchine, who transplanted the spirit, if not the letter, of Maryinsky classicism. That's why the first thing the Kirov did before its tour last year was request permission to perform some Balanchine ballets. The implications were eloquent. The Kirov presented both its own full-length *Sleeping Beauty* and Balanchine's distilled, neoclassical *Theme and Variations*, his *Beauty* seen through a crystal ball. It was the first step toward a future the company had been denied—an instance of reverse humility and self-knowledge.

To those who won't be able to see the Soviets or the defectors first-hand this season, two remedies recommend themselves. The 1986 Kirov Ballet production of *Don Quixote* on video (Kultur) is a great way to see the company as it looks



**Yelena Pankova,  
Alexandr Lunyov**

today. As Kitri, Tatyana Terekhova is plain and strong, with accents of streaking audacity. She speaks for the company—for the fire it lights between a rock and a hard place. Upon Rudolf Nureyev's defection from the Kirov, in 1961, he was instantly hailed as the new Nijinsky—hard to believe if you've seen him dance lately. An array of Nureyev videos is available; begin with the classic 1966 *Romeo and Juliet*, with Margot Fonteyn (Kultur), the lady to his bright tyger.

*BAM!*

Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival breeds risk. That's why choreographers love to use this venue to take the leap from short to full-length works. Both Bill T. Jones and Susan Marshall, on the line-up this season, presented their first full-length works here (respectively, *Secret Pastures*, a wonky "wild child" jungle story, and *Interior With Seven Figures*, the portrait of a family caught in undertows of possessive desire). Expect a magpie array of dance forms with a touch of Dada from Jones (November 7 to 10). And Marshall is a movement minimalist whose emotional engines roil and rumble like the subway under BAM (November 27 to December 9). For tickets call 718-636-4100.

*The Russian is coming*

Tchaikovsky may be the patron saint of Russian imperial dance, but here he's the Daddy Warbucks: it is Christmas *Nutcrackers* that keep companies economically viable, bringing audiences back year after year and bringing new audiences in. High points include the cameo-cut performance of Tina LeBlanc's *Sugar Plum Fairy* (Joffrey Ballet: New York's City Center, November 15 to December 2, 212-581-7907; Iowa City's Hancher Auditorium, December 6 to 12, 319-335-1160; and Los Angeles's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, December 19 to 30, 213-972-7642) and Vadim Strukov, the most fascinating Drosselmeyer in America (Boston Ballet: Wang Center, November 23 to December 30, 617-931-2000). Embracing E.T.A. Hoffmann's sinister dichotomy, Strukov is a fevered young poet and an aged alchemist in one—he spikes and silvers his hair.

His presence is glowing, lunar, and Act I's momenta seem to pitch and curl out his cape—he casts ecstatic shadows.



***Nutcracker*, Boston Ballet**



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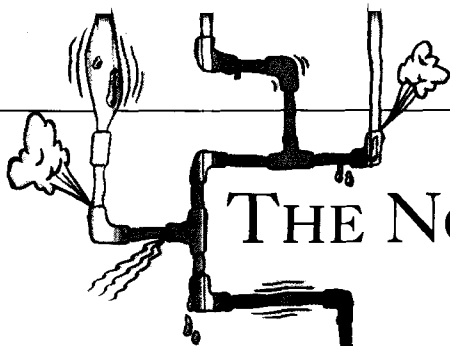
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# THE NOVEMBER ALMANAC

## GOVERNMENT

November 6, referenda and voting for candidates for public office take place throughout the United States. Ballot initiatives this year are once again legion. On California's ballot is a comprehensive environmental package known as Big Green, which would regulate or phase out the use of carcinogenic pesticides and other chemicals, limit offshore oil drilling, and provide for the purchase and preservation of redwood forests. In Oregon an Educational Choice Initiative would allow parents, beginning with the 1991-1992 school year, to send their children to any public school in the state or, alternatively, to receive a tax credit of up to \$2,500 if they choose to send their children to private schools or educate them at home. Alaska will consider a proposition to recriminalize any use of marijuana, Arizona will consider whether to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., with a holiday, Oregon whether to make mandatory the notification of a parent when an unmarried daughter who is a minor seeks an abortion, Colorado whether to limit the number of terms of office that can be served by elected state officials, including congressmen.



## EXPIRING PATENT

No. 3,771,192. Combination toy dog and vacuum cleaner. "A toy dog closely resembling a real dog and having a hollow interior in which is mounted a vacuum cleaner having a suction hose which is retractable from the tail end of the dog. This enables vacuuming a dog after a hair cut and grooming without causing fear to the dog, inasmuch as the vacuum cleaner noise is greatly muffled [sic] by such enclosure."



## Q & A

*Why is there sometimes a change in sound as water coming from the tap warms up?*

Squeaks, groans, pitch changes, and other noises that may herald the arrival of hot water in the sink are generally the result of pipes' expanding (and vibrating or rubbing against their surroundings) as they are heated by the water flowing through them. The plumbing systems of most houses contain copper pipes, which lengthen more than an inch per hundred feet with every hundred-degree rise in temperature. Because water in the home can be as much as 70 degrees hotter than pipes at room temperature, the expansion, and resulting sound effects, can be significant. Noise may also be generated when the faucet is shut off abruptly, causing the sudden arrest of gallons of fast-moving water.

## THE SKIES

November 2, the first Full Moon after the Harvest Moon, known as the Hunter's Moon. 4, Mars, brilliant this month—brighter than any star—tonight can be seen a mere three degrees below a fat gibbous Moon. 17, New Moon; the Leonid meteor shower is at its peak at 6:00 P.M. 19, in Point Barrow, Alaska, today, at 1:50 P.M., the Sun will set and it will not rise again until 1:06 P.M. next January 22. 20, Mars makes its closest approach to Earth tonight—about 50 million miles. Look for it high amid the constellations Hyades and Pleiades.



## ARTS & LETTERS

November 13-15, the contents of the late Greta Garbo's Manhattan apartment, including several important French Impressionist and modern paintings, will go on the auction block in New York City. 21, the National Council of Teachers of English will announce its annual Double-speak Award, to call attention to public statements that are deemed "deceptive, evasive, euphemistic, confusing, or self-contradictory." 27, presentation of the 40th annual National Book Awards. Also this month Simon & Schuster will publish *An American Life: The Autobiography*, by former President Ronald Reagan.



## ENVIRONMENT

For the past seven years the Saturday after Thanksgiving has seen motorcyclists roaring across the desert during the annual Barstow (California)-to-Las Vegas race. Now the future of the race is in doubt. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which has jurisdiction over the federally owned desert and rangeland through which most of the race is run, announced last spring that in accordance with its interpretation of the 1980 federal California Desert Conservation Area Plan, it would no longer accept applications for point-to-point motorized races, in part to protect the endangered desert tortoise. Last year 1,200 motorcyclists rode the 148-mile Barstow-to-Vegas course. The American Motorcyclist Association has won a ruling that the BLM must at least consider applications for races. The bureau, for its part, is considering an amendment to the plan which would explicitly ban point-to-point motorized races forever.



## HEALTH & SAFETY

November is the peak of the hunting season in New England and much of the northern half of the United States, with the opening of the seasons for duck, goose, pheasant, turkey, and big game; it is also, not surprisingly, the beginning of the peak season in North America for hunting accidents. The story here is one of improvement, thanks largely to education programs, participation in which most states and Canadian provinces now require before they will grant a hunting license. In 1967 some 2,591 accidents and 400 fatalities were reported in the United States and seven provinces of Canada; the figures have declined to 1,542 and 177 respectively, even as the number of hunters has risen.

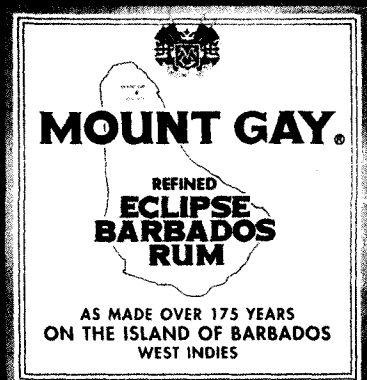
## 75 YEARS AGO

Elisabeth Woodbridge, writing in the November, 1915, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The professionalizing, or semi-professionalizing, of married women is, however, coming. It is coming more slowly to them than it has come to unmarried women, because they have, in general, only half-time to offer, and the community is only beginning to wake up to the value of the half-time worker and the advantages of the half-time job, so that as yet it has very few such jobs to give. . . . For its effect on the children there is little to fear. Anything which adds to the strength and interest of the mother's life is in the long run good for the children."





# THE CALL



# REPORTS & COMMENT

## PUBLIC HEALTH

### Dirty Chicken

*If consumers knew of the filth in many poultry-processing plants and the likelihood that the chicken they buy is contaminated or diseased, many USDA inspectors say, they would think twice before buying it.*

*Has a move toward industry self-inspection meant that a USDA stamp of approval is no longer reassuring?*

AMERICANS ARE eating more poultry these days, because they think it's good for them. With one third the saturated fat of lean beef, chicken seems the cleaner, safer food. Poultry is also cheap: it is one of the few products whose prices in constant dollars have steadily decreased since the 1950s. This year Americans will eat more than ninety pounds per person, almost double the amount of poultry they ate in 1970 and more than the amount of beef they consume.

In the past few years, however, a less healthful side to poultry has emerged. While poultry production and consumption in the United States have risen sharply, public attention has been drawn to high rates of poultry contamination by disease-bearing microorganisms, especially salmonella. A pathogenic bacterium abundant in nature, particularly in animal feces, salmonella causes everything from mild diarrhea, fever, and flu-like symptoms

to death. In 1985 the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that 35 percent of chicken carcasses were contaminated with salmonella. Last year USDA tests of five processing plants in the Southeast, the leading poultry-producing region, found salmonella levels of 57.5 percent.

Whether or not poultry contamination is on the rise is debated; scientists say, however, that it definitely is not going down. What is certainly rising is the number of people getting sick from salmonella—one current estimate is 2

to 4 million Americans a year. The actual number is not known, because most people who suffer from salmonellosis—and, indeed, most food-borne illness—never know what hit them. Contaminated food often looks and tastes fine. Food-borne bacteria frequently multiply in the body for one to seven days before they reach levels high enough to cause illness. According to Douglas Archer, the deputy director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, about two or three



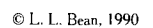


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percent of the people suffering severe diarrheal illness, such as one gets from salmonella, develop reactive arthritis within weeks. A smaller number of people come down with inflammation of various tissues, neurological problems, or other diseases, some of which can be fatal. In fact, Archer says, 2,000 Americans die of salmonella poisoning each year—mainly the very old, the immuno-compromised, and the very young. Although the number of cases of salmonellosis that can be traced to poultry is unknown, Dr. Robert Tauxe, a specialist in enteric diseases at the Centers for Disease Control, says that CDC surveys indicate that poultry is a significant source.

Scientists are tracking another pathogenic bacterium, *Campylobacter jejuni*, which causes similar gastrointestinal symptoms, sometimes with bloody stools. Clinicians have been able to culture *Campylobacter* from fecal specimens only since the late 1970s. Once they were able to detect it, they discovered that *Campylobacter* might be responsible for at least as many cases of food-borne illness as salmonella. Over half of the sporadic outbreaks of campylobacteriosis have been attributed to poultry. Indeed, samples of poultry contamination indicate *Campylobacter* levels similar to or higher than those of salmonella.

If the 1980s were the decade of cholesterol and fat, the 1990s will be the decade of food-borne infectious disease, Archer says. With the rise in immuno-deficient and elderly populations, more people will die from contaminated food. When mishandled or undercooked, poultry, Archer says, poses a great threat.

Why is poultry so dirty? Unfortunately, the very technology that has made poultry plentiful and cheap has also increased the spread of disease-bearing bacteria.

OVER THE PAST twenty-five years there has been a revolution in the slaughter and processing practices for meat and poultry—indeed, in the entire system of raising animals to slaughter-weight quickly and cheaply. The poultry industry has grown from an annual volume of 2.1 billion birds in 1964 to more than 6 billion birds today. The expansion has been made possible by intensive farming practices, which concentrate ani-

mals in huge warehouses; sophisticated systems of temperature, feed, and water controls; genetic selection of the biggest and hardiest birds; the regular use of antibiotics, which speed the birds' rate of growth (just how is not understood) and enable them to withstand stressful growing conditions; and a highly advanced understanding of poultry nutrition. Innovations like these have decreased the time it takes to grow a three-pound chicken from four months in 1940 to just six weeks today. Volume has also been boosted by automatic slaughtering plants that whiz 21 million chickens a day through the process at speeds up to ninety-one birds a minute, as machines beat off feathers and pluck out entrails. While the technological advances have been remarkable, they have unfortunately been made without regard to controlling microbial contamination.

Contamination begins, poultry scientists say, in the egg, where a tiny percentage of unhatched chicks carry pathogens from their mothers. In the crowded "grow-out" houses, more birds are contaminated by contact with other chickens, wild birds, rodents, the feed, and the buildings themselves.

Contamination begins in earnest, however, during the trip from farm to slaughterhouse. Here poultry undergo the greatest stress of their short lives and at the same time are squeezed together, facilitating the spread of bacteria. "By the time chickens leave the farm," says Nelson Cox, a microbiologist at the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, in Athens, Georgia, "only one to three percent have salmonella in their intestines, although most have it on their skin and feathers. But this explodes to twenty to twenty-five percent in transport, because the birds are deprived of feed for twelve hours, jammed into little coops—about ten to twelve birds per three-and-a-half-foot-square coop—and they're eating each other's fecal matter throughout the trip."

At the slaughterhouse the level of contamination skyrockets. By the time chickens leave the slaughterhouse, Cox says, "the contamination levels can be upwards of seventy percent."

After having their throats slit, chickens are dipped into a tank of scalding water to loosen the feathers, which are often blackened with mud and feces from life at the farm. Occasionally a

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*Olga Cassini*

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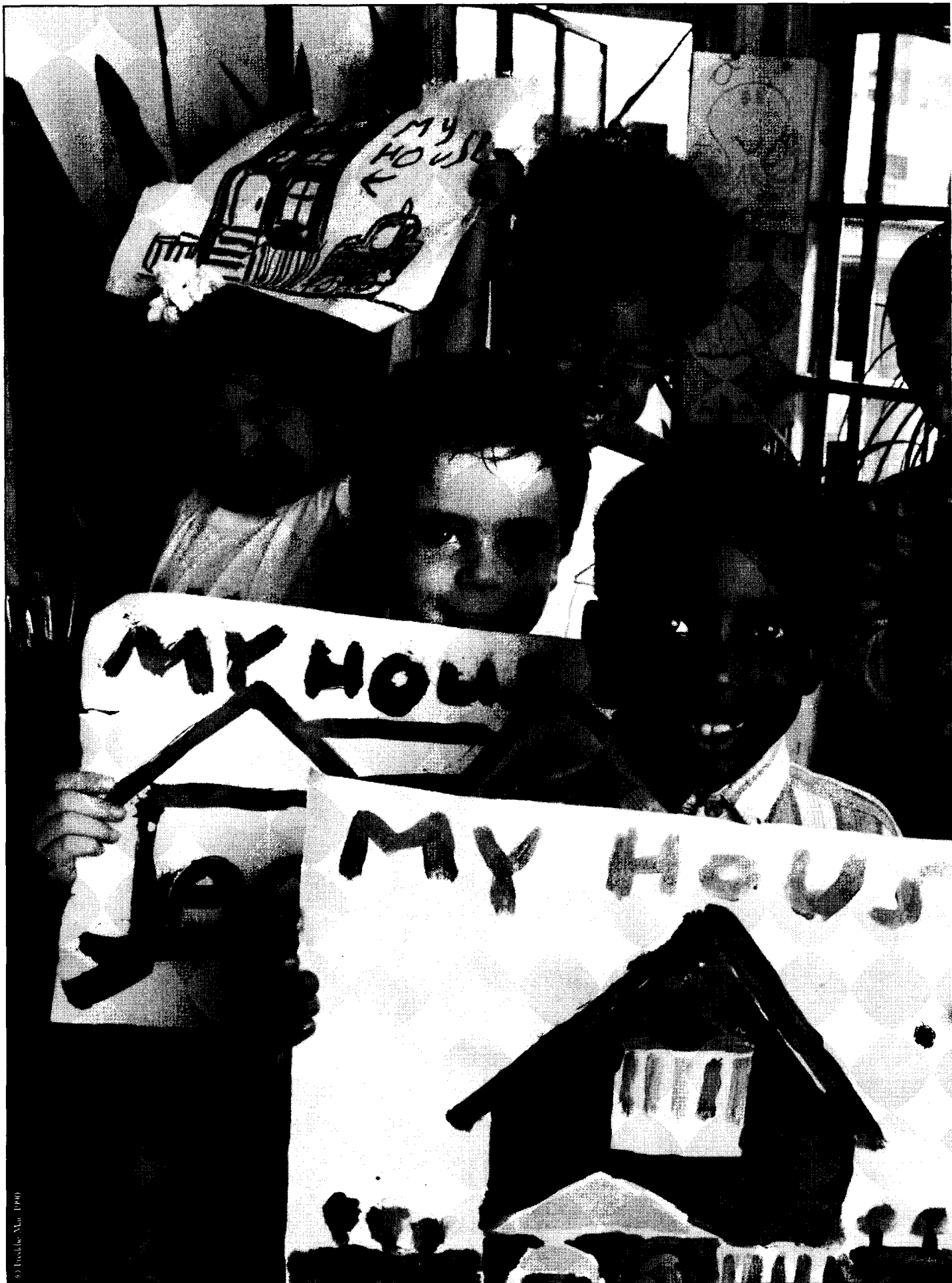
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*Olga Cassini*

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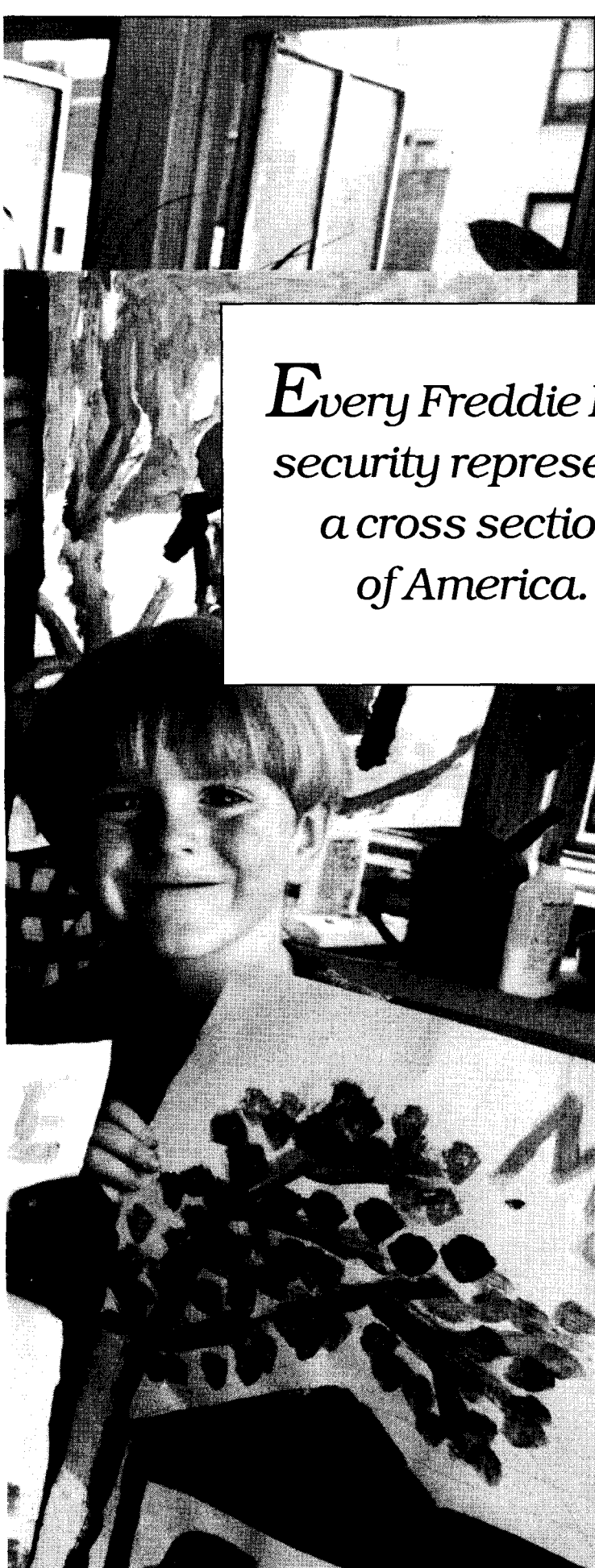
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bird will still be breathing and will inhale the filthy water, drawing bacteria into its system. The hot water also opens its pores, allowing more bacteria to enter the skin. Then defeathering machines, with rubber fingers the size of a man's thumb, beat the bird carcasses to knock off the feathers. If there are scabs, scales, or tears on the skin, the machines may pound contamination into the skin; they also press feces out of the animal. The machines themselves create an aerosol mist of bacteria as they work, contaminating surrounding birds. Automatic eviscerating machines compound the problem. They remove the intestines of each bird at high speed, often breaking open the viscera and spilling the contents—including feces—over the bird. Finally, the birds are dropped into a large chill tank, where their temperature is quickly reduced to 40° F. Chilling curbs microbial growth, but tanks allow feces to wash from one bird to another. (The scalding tanks have the same drawback.)

Chlorine is often added to the water in order to limit the bacterial spread, but a number of foreign countries, including Canada, won't buy birds that have been soaked in chlorinated water, so chlorine is not always used. Chlorine can react with organic materials, such as chicken skin, and produce chloramines, which are carcinogenic; the hazard to people is far from established, however. Although chlorine does reduce the level of pathogens in the water, Gerald Kuester, a microbiologist who researched poultry slaughter when he worked at the USDA, says that it is ineffective in killing the bacteria on a carcass, because it is neutralized by animal protein. "The chlorine is quickly bound to any organic matter," says Kuester, who now works for Public Citizen, "and never gets to the bacteria."

Chlorinated or no, birds from chill tanks can be very dirty. "At the beginning of the day the chill-tank water is clear and clean," one inspector says. "But as the day goes on, it becomes murky, dirty-brownish, and bloody." By the end of the day, when the tank is drained, the bottom may be a foot deep in filth.

Kuester says that washing—the industry's method for cleaning off soiled carcasses—doesn't remove the bacteria either, because they can cling tightly to

the skin. Washing serves only to remove the evidence; the contamination remains. Thorough cooking does kill the bacteria, but while a bird is raw, it is often loaded with pathogens. "At the end of the line the birds are no cleaner than if they had been dipped in a dirty toilet," Kuester says. "They may have been washed, but the germs are still there." Using machines to wash away feces was illegal until 1977. That year the USDA Food Safety and Quality Service (now the Food Safety and Inspection Service), under Carol Tucker Foreman, began to allow it. Foreman, who left the USDA in 1981, now regrets her decision, explaining that she was persuaded by industry, her staff, and one study—later shown to be flawed—that found washing to be effective at removing bacteria. She has since become an outspoken critic of the washing policy.

The rate of bacterial contamination in red meat is much lower than it is in poultry—more like four percent—but similar problems exist in processing red meat. "All of these animals have pathogens on their skin and in their intestinal tracts," says Morris Potter, a veterinarian in the Division of Bacterial Diseases at the CDC. "And the problem of getting the outsides off and the insides out without contaminating the rest of the carcass has not been solved." Dehiding veal and beef creates much the same bacterial spray that defeathering machines do, says Potter. The high speed at which the operation takes place can worsen the problem.

The main reason steaks are less contaminated than broilers, Potter says, is that the skin, which is the most highly contaminated part of the animal, has been removed. It ends up hanging in your closet or shoe rack, while chicken skin ends up on your plate. Processed meats such as turkey roll, sliced roast beef, and hamburger are often as bacteria-ridden as chicken. Having been cut up and mixed about, the meat has had more opportunities to be contaminated. If one piece of beef headed for the meat grinder is contaminated with salmonella, every hamburger that emerges from the grinder will also be contaminated. Perhaps this is why a 1986 survey by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs showed that one in six samples of hamburger meat and more than half of all cooked roast beef found in the city's supermarkets, delicatessens, and butcher shops

was contaminated with some type of pathogenic bacteria. The researchers also found pathogens in more than half of the raw chicken breasts they checked.

**I**NDUSTRY SPOKESPEOPLE say that bacterial contamination is inevitable in any foodstuff and that normal hygienic precautions will protect consumers. They argue that the public has been mistakenly led to believe that absolute purity is a feasible goal. "The basic name of the game here is that anything is going to have microorganisms, I don't care if it's a tomato or a turkey," says Mahlon Burnette, a nutritional biochemist and spokesperson for the National Broiler Council.

Burnette says that the high rate of bacterial contamination in chickens is a natural phenomenon, and he believes that the high-speed technology—the mechanical eviscerators, the fast-moving lines, and the water baths—doesn't cause any extra contamination. "Mechanical eviscerators didn't come into the industry before 1976," he says, "whereas these statistics existed before." But the consumer advocate Rod Leonard, who was the director of the food inspection service in the Johnson Administration, argues that contamination levels have increased from 29 percent in the late 1960s to 35 percent in 1985, with recent scattered tests indicating a level between 50 and 75 percent. Leonard, who is now the director of the Community Nutrition Institute, in Washington, agrees that we will never have a bacteria-free food supply. "The body can handle natural amounts," he says. "The problem is that we're overwhelming every normal defense mechanism." Burnette argues that the numbers are irrelevant. "Since you don't know which animals are contaminated," he says, "you should always use care in handling and cooking them."

Most experts would agree with Burnette that careless consumer handling of raw meat and poultry is at least as much responsible for the current outbreak of food-borne illness as the food itself. All agree that consumers should adopt more stringent sanitary routines. According to the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline (800-535-4555), consumers should cook beef, veal, lamb, and poultry to a minimum internal temperature of 160° F. For





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those without a meat thermometer, poultry is safe when the juices run clear and the meat is no longer pink. Foods cooked in microwave ovens, which sometimes have "cold spots" where heat doesn't penetrate, should be stirred or rotated during cooking. (Cooking foods in a covered dish creates a hot, wet atmosphere that helps kill bacteria.) Precooked foods bought from restaurants, gourmet shops, or supermarkets, which might sit at room temperature before being sold or on the trip home, should be reheated thoroughly. Consumers are advised never to touch cooked food with the plate or knife that was used when the product was raw without washing it first, and also never to thaw frozen meats at room temperature, because microbes, which easily survive freezing, will multiply into the millions.

Consumer advocates, however, feel that too much of a burden is being placed on the consumer to clean up an inexcusably filthy product. Some also argue that the safe handling of poultry is almost impossible for consumers. A 1978 study of sixty Dutch families' dinner practices, conducted at Agricultural University in the Netherlands, found that after dinner was prepared, bacteria from chickens had spread all over the kitchen—to door and tap handles, salt shakers, and spice jars. Even after conscientious washing and rinsing, live bacteria remained on tables, cutting boards, dish cloths, and sinks. "The meat practically has to be handled the way a surgeon handles an organ before transplant," says Amy Karas, who directed the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs study of meat and poultry. After working on the study, she stopped bringing meat home. "It's too much of a problem to handle it safely," she says.

After handling raw meat or poultry, advises Paul Blake, M.D., the chief of enteric diseases at the CDC, consumers should scrub everything they have touched in warm soapy water: utensils, pots, cutting boards, drawer handles, sinks, countertops, the phone, the baby. Skin must be washed for at least twenty seconds to kill bacteria. Salmonella can live up to six months on a wooden cutting board, so it's best to switch to a plastic one, which can be sterilized in the dishwasher. For those who insist on wood, a mild bleach solution is effective in killing bacteria.

Do restaurants follow such stringent procedures? They are supposed to, says an official of the FDA, which trains state and local health inspectors in how to monitor retail food establishments. However, restaurants are inspected only a few times a year, and inspectors observe food preparation practices only if they happen to drop by at mealtimes. High employee turnover in the low-skill, low-pay preparation positions also raises questions about consistency in safety practices. Most chains and large establishments have stringent handling procedures of their own, knowing that an outbreak of disease traced to one of their restaurants would devastate business, and they cook chicken to a high internal temperature.

Precooked and packaged foods sold in supermarkets, such as chicken frankfurters and turkey roll, are inspected by one of 200 "compliance officers" from the USDA, who visit processing plants daily. Samples are periodically sent to one of five regional laboratories across the country. Because it takes seven or more days to transport and grow bacterial cultures, the sampled food usually has gone to supermarkets by the time the USDA sees the results. If the sample shows bacteria, the agency initiates a recall. During the first eight months of this year the USDA issued thirteen recalls, involving an infinitesimal percentage of all precooked food sold in that period.

While USDA and industry representatives say that the contamination problem and the many resulting illnesses and deaths would be avoided if people handled food more carefully, they are reluctant to require warning labels on the food. Lester Crawford, the chief of the FSIS, says that the agency has a vigorous consumer-education program involving the distribution of thousands of publications and news releases, public-service announcements on television and radio, education programs in schools, and the Meat and Poultry Hotline. These efforts are inadequate, says Ellen Haas, the executive director of Public Voice for Food and Health Policy, a nonprofit research and advocacy group. "Brochures or advertisements cannot adequately substitute for a package label that the consumer will see right before he or she prepares and cooks poultry," Haas said in 1987 before a congressional committee. The USDA

allows companies to put instructions for safe food handling on poultry packaging, and many have done so. But the labels do not say that the food may cause illness if the instructions aren't followed.

**E**VEN IF THE technology of modern farming, slaughtering, and processing practices were found to be safe in principle, actual practices are sometimes not. "I can tell you stories that would make your hair stand up," says Manford Parker, a retired USDA inspector who worked in meat and poultry plants for eighteen years. He is one of 125 inspectors across the country who have told the Government Accountability Project, a non-profit watchdog group, in signed affidavits, of seeing diseased or wormy giblets, hearts, and livers; paint chips and metal shavings falling on the meat; roaches everywhere; toilets containing human excrement overflowing onto floors where chickens were sometimes dropped; chicken-processing equipment that was covered with rotting meat and that was left uncleaned for days; chickens that were already dead before the slaughtering process (a sign of serious disease); and rat infestation so severe that one worker would drive rather than walk across an alleyway out of fear of being attacked.

Are the popular name-brand chickens, like Tyson, Holly Farms, and Perdue, cleaner? Since none of these companies would allow me to tour any of their plants, I must rely on the reports of others. Perdue prides itself on its clean, healthful image. Yet in November of last year Donna Bazemore, an activist for workers' rights who had worked at a Perdue plant in Robersonville, North Carolina, submitted testimony to a House education and labor subcommittee that "the floors regularly are covered with grease, fat, sand, and roaches," along with spit, chewed tobacco, snuff, and feces. Chickens regularly fall off the line and into all the muck on the floor, she reported, and supervisors put the contaminated fowl right back on the line, where they are processed for human consumption. Bazemore also described abusive treatment of employees: macabre working conditions under which strenuous work and insufficient breaks cause employees to vomit, faint, and urinate on themselves or on the floor;

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insufficient safeguards that result in lost fingers and occasionally in lost limbs; and company policies that are unsympathetic to resulting employee injuries and illnesses.

Perdue Farms immediately issued a statement to the subcommittee denying Bazemore's accusations, calling her testimony misleading and false, and inviting committee members to inspect any Perdue plants at any time. In carefully worded sworn statements two Perdue vice-presidents (one already retired) said that their processing plants meet USDA inspection rules and regulations, that workers do not put chickens that have failed inspection back on the line behind inspectors' backs, that they treat their employees as "participants in the business," and that the company has an array of policies whose purpose is to honor and safeguard its employees. Lester Crawford also submitted a letter stating that a USDA inspection conducted after the testimony found "no evidence of the kind of gross violations of Federal inspection rules and regulations described in the . . . testimony." Crawford also pointed out that Bazemore's testimony was based not entirely on her own experience but in part on that of other workers. However, another former Perdue employee and two USDA inspectors who had worked at the Robersonville plant later submitted affidavits to the subcommittee supporting Bazemore's testimony with more lurid stories of filth and abuse at the plant, accounts that they said were based on their own observations. When I asked a Perdue spokesperson to comment on the episode, he said, "It simply does not make sense that a company like Perdue could demand a premium price for its product if it were produced from such horrific conditions."

If violations like the ones described by Bazemore and other workers and inspectors are in fact occurring, what have the USDA inspectors been doing all this time? The USDA places more than 7,400 inspectors, 1,200 of them trained veterinarians, in meat and poultry processing plants to check carcasses as they ride along the assembly line where they are cleaned and cut up. The inspectors were originally placed in meat-packing plants in 1906, when Congress passed the Federal Meat Inspection Act after Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* shocked the nation with its

accounts of filth and worker death in the Chicago slaughterhouses. In 1957 the Poultry Products Inspection Act brought poultry under the same inspection system. After the original law was passed, no meat could be sold in interstate and foreign commerce without the USDA inspector's stamp of approval. To earn the stamp, each piece of meat was examined by a USDA inspector who would take a good look as it moved down the line. Although the inspection rules were complex, what they amounted to was that if the meat showed signs of disease or filth, no stamp. Consumers felt safe knowing that no meat would reach them unless



it contained that stamp of approval. In the early 1980s, however, inspectors complained that things had changed.

After the Reagan Administration took office, in 1980, the speed at which poultry moved down the assembly line was allowed to more than double. In the 1970s, inspectors say, the line speed was about thirty-five birds a minute. If something caught an inspector's eye, he could stop the line to take a closer look at a potentially diseased or contaminated bird. The maximum rate allowed is ninety-one birds a minute, and now many inspectors say that they can't see much of anything. Even if an inspector is able to find a defect on a bird, the new "streamlined inspection system" (SIS), implemented in 1986, may not allow him to do much about it. If the violation involves what under SIS is considered an aesthetic rather than a public-health problem, the inspector must wait for plant employees to clean up the problem. Some inspectors say that many of the violations said to be aesthetic—such as oil, rust, feathers, and lesions on skin—are in fact dangerous.

There is a backup system, Food Safety Inspection Service officials point out. The inspectors take a sample of ten birds per line twice per eight-hour shift to estimate the level of contamination. If violations exceed a certain threshold, the whole group of birds on the line flunks, opening the possibility that every bird on it will be reviewed.

This may be good in theory, consumer groups say, but not in practice. In the first place, they say, the sample is too small to be representative of the lot. At the Gold 'N' Plump broiler plant in Coldspring, Minnesota, for example, inspectors take four samples of ten birds each out of about 62,500 slaughtered every eight hours. Elementary statistics dictates that ten out of 15,000 is nowhere near a valid sample size. Second, although a day's slaughter may contain birds from as many as ten different suppliers, the sample may be drawn from just one supplier's birds. If the sample passes, the other nine suppliers' birds are approved too, even though they may have been raised under vastly different conditions. Administration officials counter that plant employees are also taking samples—ten birds per line per hour, with government inspectors checking their paperwork. However, the resulting sample size remains small, and the question is raised as to whether industry self-inspection is a fair substitute for government inspection if a government stamp is to be given at the end of the process.

Some inspectors say that no matter who performs the sample inspection, the USDA standards for examining a lot permit it to receive a perfect score even though it may be full of violations. Two sores or two abscesses on a bird do not count: it must have three of any one, and even then the bird passes—the abscesses and sores are trimmed off. One cancer tumor is also allowed, and is trimmed off (as far as is known, cancer in poultry is not transmissible to people). "It's almost impossible to flunk a lot," says Dave Carney, an inspector and a union representative from Salem, Ohio. "Under SIS you can easily pass a lot of birds that are full of feathers, fecal contamination, blood clots, skin blisters, and abscesses." Air sacculitis, an infection of the respiratory system which can produce pus around the lungs, is al-



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lowed if it isn't too advanced. Isn't such a condition an indication that the whole bird is sick? "It's *got* to be systemic," one veterinarian inspector says, "but I'm not allowed to say so."

Even if a sample does flunk, that does not automatically trigger a full-scale examination. First the company gets to inspect a new sample of its own, and to choose the birds it wants to examine. If the company's results are not consistent with the USDA findings, Carney says, nothing happens.

When I asked a USDA administrator about these charges, he claimed that inspectors are in fact allowed to use their own judgment: "These decisions are made by people who are trained to know the difference between a tumor that is superficial and one that is systemic. There are no absolutes." Lester Crawford, the FSIS chief, agrees: "The inspector is sovereign. He may slow down the line, he may stop the line, he may close the plant" if he believes there is a public health threat.

Many inspectors, however, say that they are often reprimanded by USDA higher-ups when they flunk too many birds or stop the line to inspect more closely. When plant managers complain to USDA officials about inspectors' decisions, the inspectors say, the officials often rule in favor of the plants. Inspectors also charge that they are sometimes punished by the USDA for trying to enforce the law. One says, "Inspectors who try to enforce the law are reprimanded, hounded, transferred." Crawford says, "That would be a felony, and we would not tolerate that. We don't have the right to overrule the inspectors."

As for inspectors' stories of widespread violations in meat and poultry plants, "only about five percent are committing violations," Crawford says. "The vast majority are in compliance with our regulations." Indeed, not all inspectors are unhappy. Ron Farrell, a veterinarian inspector at three Ohio meat and poultry plants, says that he has never had a problem with the plants, the USDA policies, or the line speeds during his year and a half with the FSIS. Meat and poultry industry spokespeople say that inspectors' complaints are exaggerated in response to the recent modernization of the system, which will make inspectors less important. In 1985 the National Academy of Sciences issued a report charac-

terizing the USDA inspection as old-fashioned and unscientific. Having inspectors examine each animal's carcass, the report said, was insufficient, because most contamination that is transmitted to people cannot be seen with the naked eye; the product should be laboratory-tested at key points during the slaughtering process. The report advised that more use should be made of statistical sampling techniques and recommended that a system for reducing microbiological contamination be instituted at critical points during the process.

USDA officials say that they acted on these recommendations when they streamlined the system, implementing sampling procedures and limiting the duties of inspectors. They also say that they are trying to get the plants themselves to be more active in the process, in order to move from government inspection toward industry quality control. The unhappy inspectors are telling the public about filth and negligence in the plants, USDA and industry spokespeople claim, because they want to return to the old system, in which inspectors had more power and discretion.

It may be true that the inspection system needed to be modernized, but that is not what the USDA has done, consumer advocates say. "What they've done," Rod Leonard, at the Community Nutrition Institute, says, "is to dismantle the inspection system without putting a new one in its place. Sampling ten birds per line is hardly what one would call scientifically based statistical sampling. Washing away feces is not modernizing, if the microorganisms remain."

Crawford says that the FSIS is not dismantling the inspection system, only making it more efficient. In addition to removing unnecessary steps, he says, the agency is trying to develop a system to control microbiological contamination during slaughter, as recommended by the NAS report. He points to a project in Puerto Rico, where scientists are studying the life cycle of salmonella to determine how it can be controlled during breeding, growth, and slaughter. From this research, Crawford says, regulations will be issued within the next two years. He also points to a committee he chairs that is "considering the wisdom" of setting threshold limits on bacteria in

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seafood, meat, and poultry products.

The USDA is at the same time working to streamline the inspection of cattle. The new system will cut back inspectors' duties, allowing a dramatic increase in the pace at which cattle move through the slaughtering process—the USDA forecasts a 40 percent increase in industry productivity. USDA spokespeople do not say that the new system will reduce product contamination, only that it will improve inspector efficiency.

Can most of the industry be trusted to ensure the quality of its own product, with reduced responsibility for USDA inspectors? USDA spokespeople say yes. Yet a 1981 Government Accounting Office study of sixty-two meat and poultry slaughtering plants found that 26 percent were not meeting FSIS standards. Months later few plants had improved. The GAO concluded that neither the plants nor the USDA showed much interest in complying with federal sanitation standards.

Furthermore, 1981 was not the last time poultry processors were caught committing violations and the USDA failed to take appropriate action. In 1987 an employee of a Simmons Industries poultry plant in Southwest City, Missouri, admitted before CBS's *60 Minutes* television cameras that he had removed "retain" tags from thousands of contaminated chickens and sent the birds on their way for general consumption. Another employee and several inspectors who worked at the plant reported that this violation was only one of many that Simmons and other plants were committing every day. Following the broadcast the USDA responded to the public outcry by announcing that the plant would be inspected more intensely, with surprise visits, to ensure that it had improved. However, in an affidavit filed with the U.S. Department of Labor last spring a former Simmons employee, Sam Shrum, said that the USDA's get-tough policy was a sham. "We always had from one to two weeks' notice for all the 'surprise' visits and we knew what was going to be checked," Shrum said. After the *60 Minutes* broadcast the USDA included a different Simmons Industries plant in a special pilot project in company self-inspection—a project that the USDA claimed was available only to plants with exemplary records.

"The chief of inspection has always been in an awkward position," says Carol Foreman, who was an assistant secretary of agriculture under President Jimmy Carter. The chief of inspection, whose job is to police an industry, reports to the Secretary of Agriculture, whose job is to support the industry. Under Reagan the chief's position became even more awkward. The inspection services were moved from a consumer division of the USDA to a division whose other functions include marketing. Robert Bartlett, the chief of the program-review branch of the FSIS, a unit that monitors inspection practices, described the new attitude in a 1981 staff meeting:

The political climate is such that the special interest groups supporting the meat and poultry industry have won and now have the ear of Washington. They "paid their dues" and are now in the driver's seat. . . . The consumer base has disintegrated. We must be versatile and adjust to this new challenge.

**W**HAT CAN BE done to improve sanitation at poultry plants? "We have to stop the bacteria at the very beginning of the process, before the animals are born—or at the very end, just before delivery to the supermarkets," says Nelson Cox, the Agricultural Research Service microbiologist, who works with a team of other scientists. Some possible approaches include:

**Food irradiation.** Zapping packaged poultry with nuclear radiation kills most bacteria. Although irradiation for poultry was recently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (as irradiation for fruits and vegetables and a number of other foods has been), the poultry industry has no immediate plans for using the technology, because of widespread consumer fear that the process is unsafe. The industry also worries that the added cost would lower demand.

Irradiation works by splitting molecular chemical bonds with high-energy beams. When enough bonds are split in salmonella and other contaminating bacteria, the bacteria are killed. The problem is in the formation of free radicals, which set off a multitude of chemical reactions in the food and create new molecules called radiolytic products. Whether the radiolytic prod-

ucts are safe is contested, with disputed studies raising doubts about long-term safety. In any case, for now neither the public nor the poultry industry wants to use irradiation to solve the salmonella problem.

**Banning animal parts in feed.** In this country mixing feathers, intestines, guts, and heads—the dirtiest parts of the carcass—into feed is a routine practice, and it is thought to be a major source of contamination. (Some European governments discourage it.) The bacteria are generally cooked away before the parts are added to the feed, but, Cox notes, the rush to produce tons of feed daily results in some re-contaminated feed; the trucks that deliver the raw chicken parts to the feed mill, for example, are seldom cleaned before they carry away the cooked feed. However, Cox says, there is a serious obstacle to banning the leftover chicken parts from feed: "What else are we going to do with the three million tons of it that producers generate each year?"

**Cleaner technology.** As replacements for scald tanks and rubber defeathering fingers, Cox and his colleagues have been examining mist scalders that blow hot steam on the birds to loosen the feathers. These mist scalders are so effective, Cox says, "that when the birds emerge, you can almost blow the feathers off with your mouth." Unfortunately, the scalders discolor the birds' skin, making the technology unattractive to processors.

**"Competitive exclusion."** As Cox explains this technique, "You load up the animal's gut with beneficial bacteria that take up all the parking spaces." As a result, human-disease-causing bacteria can't infect the animal. He and his colleagues are studying the benefits of competitive exclusion. "We punch a hole in the egg and drop the bacteria culture in just before the chick hatches. It's born with the intestinal tract of an adult chicken—a superchick." Cox thinks that this method, along with chemically cleaning nests to prevent contamination of eggshells, may be the answer. Currently no large-scale American producer is using competitive exclusion. Some smaller ones are, although their method is cruder and, Cox says, less effective than the one the USDA is developing.

In an attempt to find a healthier chicken, many consumers have turned





to free-range chicken. Consumers in the Los Angeles area can buy Rocky Range chicken, which is raised outdoors under roomier-than-usual conditions, given some sunshine, and not given antibiotics or other growth-stimulating chemicals (although the chickens are still dipped in common water tanks and defeathered with rubber fingers). Although these chickens taste much better than their mass-produced counterparts, a recent *Los Angeles Times* survey found a small sample to have the same rates of salmonella as the commercial brands when bought out of supermarket meat cases.

Another alternative pursued by consumers is kosher poultry, which is slaughtered in accordance with Jewish dietary laws. The laws attempt to make the slaughter humane, and also require diseased birds to be culled and all traces of blood to be removed from healthy carcasses. The result is a more labor-intensive process and greater attention to detail.

Kosher birds move more slowly along the assembly line, allowing in-

spectors more time to spot defects. The slower process, together with manual throat-slitting, ensures that the animals stop breathing before they enter water tanks. Therefore they won't inhale the feces-filled water that would contaminate their insides. (They also won't suffer.) Every bird is inspected twice—by a USDA inspector and by a rabbi. No hot water is used, only cold water, so the pores do not open up to let in bacteria. Often when a bird shows signs of disease, the whole bird is rejected, rather than just the diseased parts. Kosher chickens also are not routinely fed low doses of antibiotics, and are given about two to three weeks longer to grow than mass-produced chickens. But they cost two to three times as much.

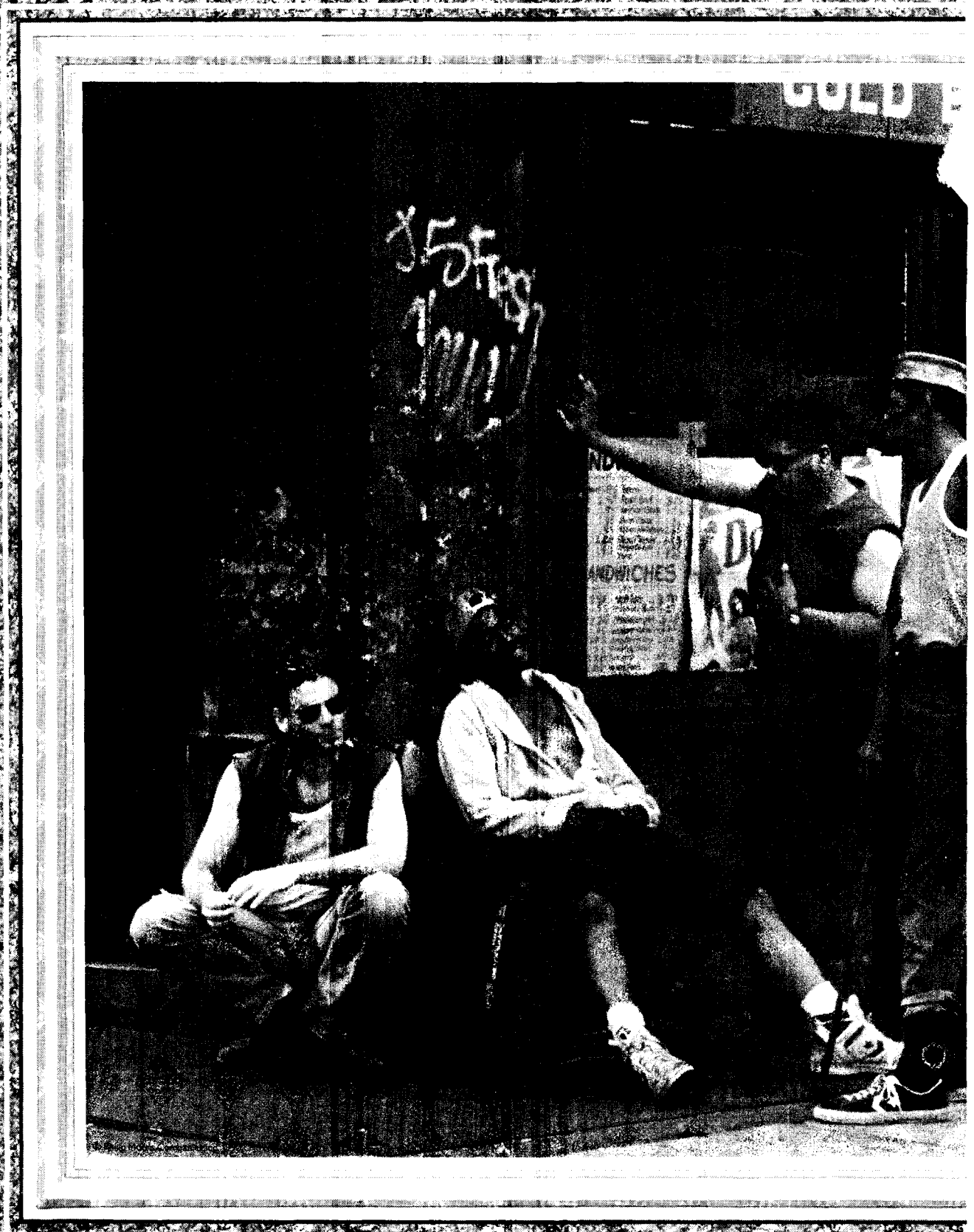
**T**HE USDA AND industry spokespeople say they are doing everything possible. Others argue, however, that more progress could easily be made. "It's amazing what can be accomplished when the priorities are there," Carol Foreman

says. When she was the chief of inspection, she says, "we decided that if a plant ended up on a chronic-problem list, we would publish its name." If that didn't work, the plant would be denied inspection services, a move that would in effect put it out of business. "As soon as we publicly announced our intentions, around 1979, the number of chronic-problem plants dropped remarkably."

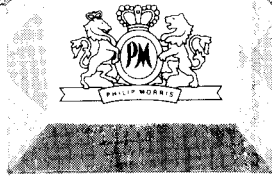
Foreman admits that the technology needed for high-speed yet safe production may not yet exist. But she believes that the industry will create it if public pressure, and government regulations, require it. "This is the most creative industry I've seen," she says. "It can make one pound of meat out of something less than two pounds of feed. They have taken what used to be a backyard operation and made it into one of the most sophisticated industries in the world. And they say, 'We can't get the germs off the food!' What they're really saying is, 'We don't share your priorities.'"

—Gene Bruce









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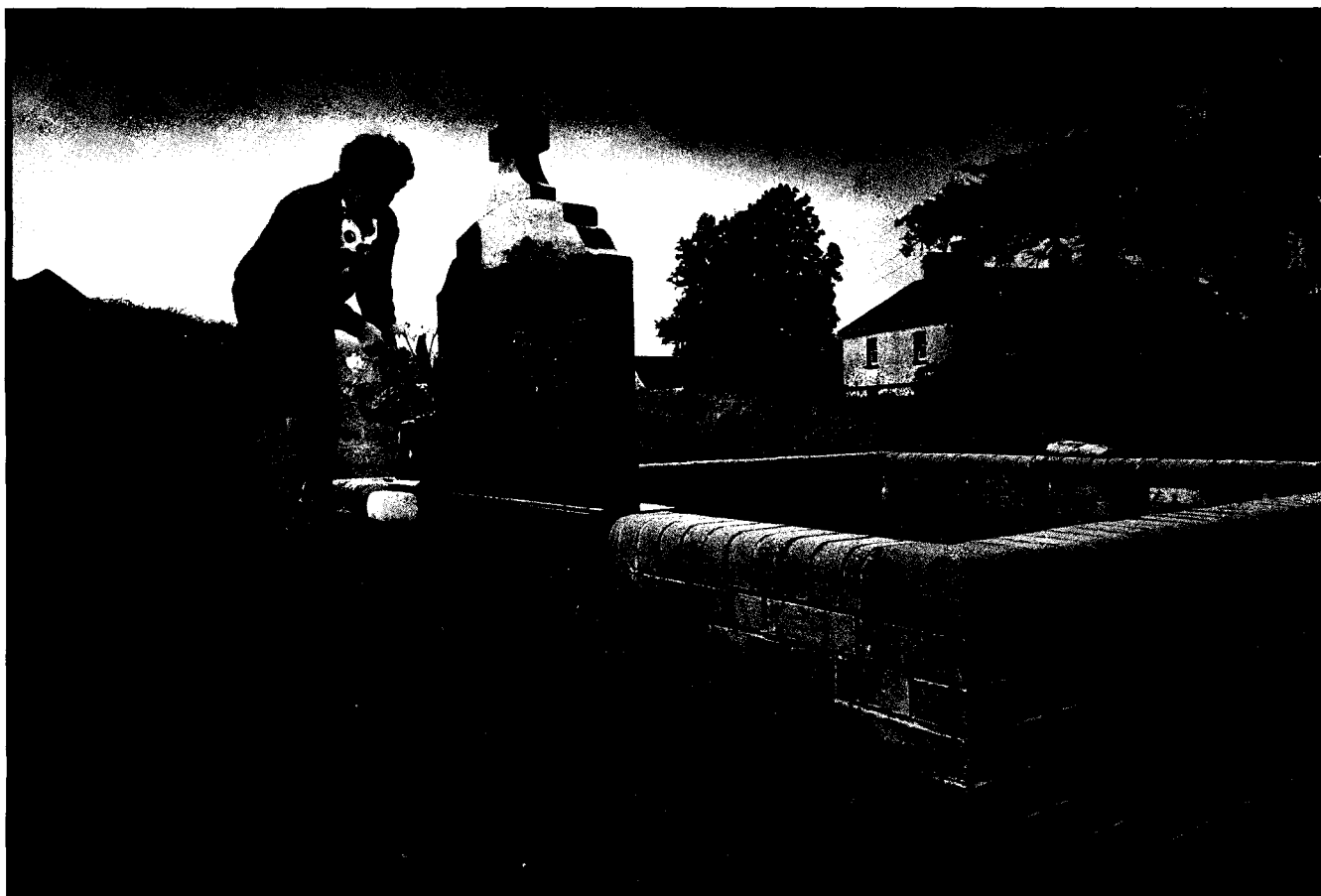
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*In Clara, County Monaghan, Elizabeth McAnespie tends the grave of her son Aidan, who was shot by a British soldier*

## NORTHERN IRELAND

# A Death on the Border

*It was a tragedy of some sort—accident or murder, the young man was dead—and it serves to put a human face on “the Troubles,” that faceless, abstract affliction*

**A** LONG A HIGH RIDGE above the camouflaged British Army barracks and the gardens that, by their very proximity to the barracks, are considered dangerous to tend, sits Aughnacloy, a small market town in Northern Ireland on the border with the Irish Republic. Below the town, on the south side of the hill, are the blast walls and watchtowers of the British Army checkpoint. The border it guards, drawn seventy years ago, has little to do with any straight-line notion

of geography. It was established on demographic lines, to reserve for Britain the six northeastern counties that seemed likely to have a Protestant majority in perpetuity. The border bisects villages and farms, but here in County Tyrone, where County Monaghan, in the Irish Republic, pushes north like a fin, it corresponds briefly with the landscape, following the dark and narrow River Blackwater. In centuries past the river was a corridor for conquest and rebellion. Today, in the green fields and hedgerows beyond the checkpoint, it is the only sign of a border otherwise as invisible as a sniper's rifle.

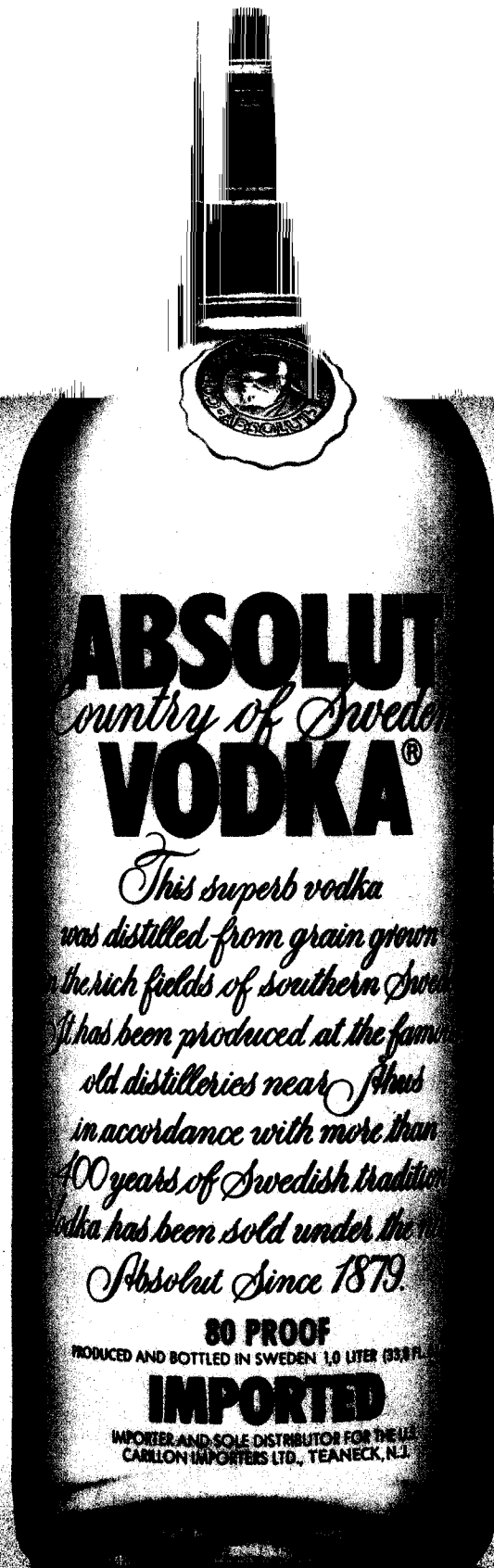
One sunny Sunday afternoon in 1988 Aidan McAnespie, twenty-three, parked his car on the Aughnacloy side of the checkpoint and walked past the soldiers on his way to a Gaelic football game in a field that lies in the broad expanse of no-man's-land between the checkpoint and the border. He was on foot because his car, a maroon sedan with big stereo speakers in the back, frequently gave the soldiers a reason to delay him. On good days that meant questions and a search. On bad days

it meant death threats and physical abuse.

The soldiers on duty were Grenadier Guards, and they were heavily armed. Irish Republican Army guerrillas have often opened fire on the checkpoint and have bombed it twice, killing one soldier on the spot. On the wall inside are photographs of people to watch out for. The soldiers also have lists of names. According to local people, these names include the McAnespies and their friends.

In Aughnacloy the McAnespies are known as Republicans, sympathetic with the aims, at least, of the IRA. Aidan's sister Eilish McCabe once ran as a candidate for Sinn Féin, the IRA's political arm, and Aidan's three older brothers live in the Irish Republic and do not come north of the border.

Aidan McAnespie was not a member of the IRA, but the soldiers did not seem to know this, and he had to pass them at the checkpoint twice a day on his way to and from work, at a poultry-processing plant in Monaghan. He said as little to them as possible, but he often wore a SPIRIT OF FREEDOM but-



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ton in memory of Bobby Sands, an IRA member and a member of the British Parliament, who died on a hunger strike in prison in 1981. Aidan was a small, wiry man, and on one occasion a soldier stood on him. Another time he was grabbed by the throat and slammed to the ground. Aidan would stop on his way home to call his mother from the filling station just south of the checkpoint. She would bicycle down through the checkpoint to meet him, put her bike in the trunk, and ride back with her son. The soldiers laughed at her. She persisted.

On this afternoon, however, Elizabeth McAnespie was still in Monaghan, after a wake for her brother-in-law the night before. Aidan had walked some 290 yards past the checkpoint, past the filling station and up a gentle hill lined with bare hedges, transparent in the unseasonable February sun. A few more steps and he would have been around the bend and out of sight. Cars carrying players and spectators to the game had been driving past, but the road was empty and no one saw Aidan at the exact moment he fell. A girl glancing up from the filling station thought he was a bundle of laundry dropped on the road. One of the first motorists who stopped to help thought he was a drunk.

The army said afterward that the bullet was fired accidentally by a young soldier in one of the towers. They said it ricocheted off the road before striking its victim. The army

called it a tragic error. Remembering the death threats, the victim's family and friends, and Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich, who came to speak at Aidan's funeral mass, called it murder.

"It is inevitable that a suggestion that death was due to a freak accident of an extraordinary kind must give rise to disbelief," said Charles Haughey, the Taoiseach, or Irish Prime Minister. In the five years before this incident police and army undercover units had been involved, by my count, in forty-seven suspicious shootings along the border. An independent British police investigation into some of these shootings had ended as a fiasco for all concerned. When the senior police investigator, Deputy Chief Constable John Stalker, of Greater Manchester, began pushing for evidence withheld from him by MI-5, the British domestic-intelligence service, he was yanked out. Only a few weeks before the McAnespie shooting the British Attorney General said that the whole matter would be dropped, in the interests of "national security." Justice, he admitted to Parliament, would not be done. At about this time the government also disclosed that the one British soldier ever convicted of murder for a shooting in Northern Ireland had been quietly returned to active duty after serving only two years of a life sentence.

The Irish government, Haughey said, would conduct its own investigation. No findings were ever made public, although a leak to the *Irish Press*

said the authorities south of the border had come to agree with those in the north, that the shooting had been accidental. Charges against the soldier of "unlawful killing" were dismissed. A song deplored the shooting—the soldiers once mockingly played it over the loudspeakers at the checkpoint, the McAnespie family says—but as months have turned into years, the case has faded from view. And yet, if there is a point at which one can finally begin to understand the conflict in Ireland, in all its violence and confusion, it is probably here on this disputed border, in the obscure town where Aidan McAnespie lived and died.

**A**UGHNACLOY HAS fewer than a thousand people, about 70 percent of them Protestants, and it has been a garrison town since the 1700s. Troops went from Aughnacloy to join Wellington's army to fight Napoleon at Waterloo. The name of the town means "stony field." When the English arrived, there was a cairn (the word comes from the Celtic *carn*) dating back to about 700 B.C. at nearby Carnteel. Cairns were resting places of kings and warriors, sanctuaries that in the eyes of the Irish could not be violated without dishonor. Local lore has it that colonists from England and Scotland used the stones from the cairn at Carnteel to build their houses.

County Tyrone was the last stronghold of resistance during the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland. At the end, in 1607, the land here was seized from the native Irish, who were killed or driven off, and given to those who had served the Crown. The surviving natives were pushed onto bogs and the unproductive highlands, and land-ownership patterns remain the same to this day. "The Protestants got the land," the Catholics say in Tyrone. "We got the view."

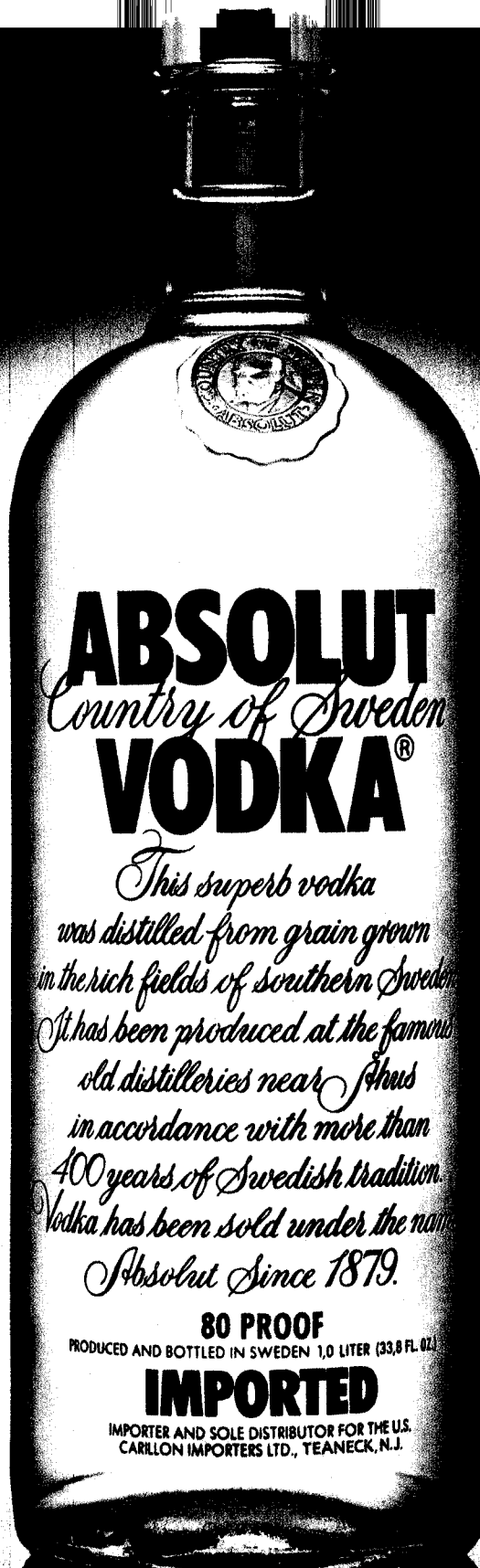
The impulse to obliterate was strong. At the cemetery in Carnteel the Celtic crosses were hacked off Catholic graves. A Protestant church built on this site was burned in the Irish rebellion of 1641, but a large Union Jack still flies over the graveyard from a ruined wall.

Aughnacloy started to become a town in the seventeenth century. Jonathan Swift once went there to visit a local squire. After 1812 it was a stop on the coach road from Dublin to Derry,



*The Protestant end of Aughnacloy, Northern Ireland*





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the ancient Irish city renamed Londonderry by the British. Part of the old road, grass-covered, runs through the top of the McAnespies' vegetable garden. The McAnespie home is at the northern edge of the town, just a few blocks from a large Catholic church, St. Mary's, where the McAnespie brothers served as altar boys. Parishioners call St. Mary's "the chapel," in a holdover from the seventeenth-century days when Catholics in this area had to meet secretly for mass in sheds or around a rock outdoors. The word "church" was reserved for the Established Church.

On market day Aughnacloy briefly comes alive with stalls and cars. Otherwise it seems a sleepy town, slightly down on its luck when compared with other border towns; it has poor public services and very few jobs for its young. Many youths go to England or the States, to Belfast or over the border to Monaghan or Dublin.

Ultimately, it seems to be the question of who will leave and who will stay that plays on the emotions of this place. Nationalists, who are almost all Catholics, feel that they are being pushed out whereas it is the British who should leave, erasing the border behind them. Unionists, including almost all the Protestants, feel outnumbered on the island of Ireland. They want to keep the border and their British ties at any cost.

"It seems to bug them, it definitely seems to bug them, that you should have anything," says Michael Muldoon, a Catholic who grew up just outside Aughnacloy, on his family's small farm in Rehaghy, a mostly Protestant area. The telephone would ring at three or four o'clock in the morning, and a voice would say, "Get out, you Fenian bastards. We're gonna burn you out."

A friend of Aidan McAnespie's, Muldoon recently moved into town in part so that he wouldn't be quite so vulnerable to threats. Ironically, he now lives only a few yards from the checkpoint. Muldoon says he is constantly harassed by the soldiers and the police. He draws the line at leaving, unlike many other young Catholic men.

Along the border many Protestants, especially the thousands who have ties with the police and the army, also live in fear. The police and the army sustained 850 fatalities—nearly a third of

all the violent deaths in Northern Ireland—from 1969 to 1988. But the Protestants also fear that they will lose their birthright through the loss of their state. Talk to them long enough and they will bring up the nightmare of being "outbred" and outnumbered by the Catholics.

The prospect that some future Catholic majority in the North might vote to join the Catholic state in the South—a slim prospect addressed by Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald in the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement—is for many Protestants a vision of cultural annihilation.

SO FORMIDABLE IS the checkpoint on the Monaghan road that a visitor might wonder why the army worries so much about security. To understand, one has only to walk down the Ravella road, which begins at the center of Aughnacloy as a sloping lane. Below the town it flattens out, passing through pastures and wildflowers, heading southwest toward the border. The Ravella road is an "unapproved" crossing, landmined by the IRA to attack the police, blown up by the army to close it to the IRA, and rebuilt by farmers whenever possible. The road is now intact but barricaded at the bridge over the river with a concrete wall topped by steel spikes. A small gap, wide enough to let a pedestrian or a bicycle through, has been left on one side. Still, locals say, the cattle smugglers get across, putting ramps from their trucks up over the wall so that the cattle can jump into the North.

Guerrillas also move arms and explosives across the border, which is honeycombed with unapproved crossings—sometimes a road, sometimes a dirt track through a farmer's field, sometimes a path over a culvert and a trickle of water. Since partition, smuggling has been common here (women used to smuggle butter in petticoat pockets), and the smugglers even built their own "roads," lines of stones to make passable the mud in ditches or depressions below the main roads, out of view of the patrols above.

The army and the police are said to maintain an unimaginably high level of surveillance here, but there are so many places that one can cross the border on foot, and have easy access to roads on the other side, that the check-

point on the Monaghan road seems as much a symbol as anything else. "An aggravation point, I'd call it," says George Todd, a Protestant who spent nine years in the British Army and now owns the filling station and general store between the checkpoint and the border. "As a security measure, it's useless."

Todd's son David won a lawsuit against the Ministry of Defense for an incident in January of 1986, in which a soldier threatened to shoot him and struck him twice on the head with a rifle butt. Todd will not discuss that incident, but he does say that deliverymen refuse to bring milk or bread or vegetables through the checkpoint, and he recalls that the soldiers, saying that they suspected a bomb, once poured out an entire shipment of milk before he could get there to pick it up.

In fact the IRA has at least twice used milk churns to hold explosives in Aughnacloy, bombing the army barracks and the center of town, but both times local Protestant farmers were compelled by force to drive the bombs into town. Neither came through the checkpoint or across the border, and neither was likely to be stopped or questioned at a roadblock anywhere else; Protestants rarely are, and in a place as small as Aughnacloy everyone knows who's Protestant and who's Catholic.

AIDAN MCANESPIE was four years old when the Troubles began, in 1969. By the time the IRA's milk-churn bomb blew up the center of Aughnacloy, he was ten. The bomb also gutted the McAnespie home, a narrow house without running water. The car that brought the bomb came into town honking its horn. "People thought it was a wedding until the driver got out and shouted a warning," Aidan's sister Eilish remembers.

Sammy Brush, a unionist councilman who grew up in Aughnacloy, also remembers that bomb. One of his cousins was the farmer forced to drive it into town while his father was held hostage. Years later the IRA came to get the cousin to drive another bomb. By this time the father was dead, and the farmer escaped by running upstairs and climbing down a rainpipe from the second floor. He has not lived in the house since.

Brush serves part-time as an officer



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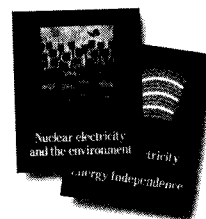
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*Catholics dismantling barricades along the border near Aughnacloy*

in the Ulster Defense Regiment, a locally recruited, almost exclusively Protestant regiment of the British Army. In addition to its regular army duties, the UDR functions as the army's local eyes and ears and is hated by many Catholics, who see it as a vehicle for vigilantism and bigotry. The first time I talked with Brush he had been up all night at the scene of an IRA bus bombing only a few miles from Aughnacloy. Seven very young soldiers had died with horrible injuries. Another lay fatally wounded. Brush drank his tea and talked for several hours with the detachment of a man in shock.

Brush himself was working as a postman and a part-time soldier in 1981 when two masked IRA men shot him four times one afternoon just after he had delivered a first-class letter down a long country lane. Armed with a Smith & Wesson .38, Brush fired back, hitting one of his attackers, who was later taken into custody in Monaghan and put in a Dublin hospital for treatment. Although the man was under police guard, he escaped. "He skipped," Brush told me. "A relative—some people say it was his sister—changed places with him in the bed, and he went out wearing her clothes."

Brush's predecessor on the mail route, also a Protestant and also a member of the UDR, had given up the job after he was injured by a booby-trap bomb. "I have walked behind at least fifty coffins of good friends," Brush told me.

Like most Protestants here, Brush dismisses the IRA's contention that its intended targets are members of the security forces or those who do business with them. He sees the victims as Protestants—period. "People make a mistake many a time to thinking that because they have a friendly relationship with both Roman Catholics and Protestants that you would, perhaps, be safer because of that," he told me. "It's completely wrong to take that point of view, because it doesn't make any difference."

**W**HEN THE TROUBLES began, both Catholics and Protestants told me, people in Aughnacloy knew each other to talk to. The sense that something was terribly wrong, something greater than individual injustices, came slowly.

Starting in 1972 the town found itself at the southwestern point of what two Irish priests would soon dub the "triangle of death," in which twenty-seven Catholics were killed in sectarian assassinations, all unsolved, in the space of three years. Marion Bowen, seven months pregnant, and her brothers Seamus and Michael McKenna were blown up by a booby-trap bomb in a house the brothers were repairing. Francis McCaughey, who had bought land for a Gaelic football field, was blown up when he opened the door of his cow barn. His brother-in-law, Owen Boyle, who built a house in a Protestant farming area, was gunned

down while helping his wife do the dishes.

"I wouldn't doubt the army done it," says Winifred Boyle, who was Owen's wife and Francis McCaughey's sister. "We're nearly sure it was the UDR." Local people believe, but cannot prove, that a regiment member from Aughnacloy was among the killers. "Even when you walk down the street, you feel scared, especially at night," says Carmel Boyle, now eighteen. She was three when her father was shot dead in front of her. "When you see the army out there, then you get scared."

"The UDR are the worst," a young man told me. "They're not soldiers. They're bitter toward every Catholic. They're provokers. The IRA keeps them at bay. For that, I'm happy."

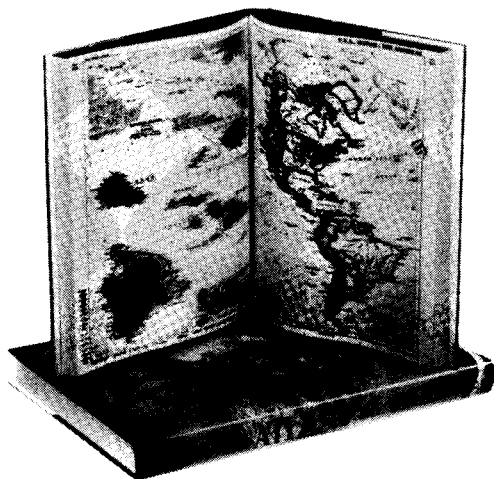
The wave of sectarian killings in the murder triangle did indeed stop when the IRA revived its border campaign. But by then many Catholics, especially young men, found themselves suspected of membership in the IRA. And Protestant fear and distrust of Catholics grew.

Kevin O'Brien, a Catholic then working as a machinist, remembers that his Protestant co-workers stopped sharing rides with him. "It was more in atmosphere than anything else: 'I can't take you this morning. Take your own car.' It was subtle, but at the same time, it was effective." Any Catholics who left the company, he said, were replaced with Protestants.

Fear and uncertainty have given rise to much suffering in Aughnacloy. A Catholic whose grandfather had been in the IRA told me that he himself refused to get involved as the Troubles heated up. Then one night in 1975, he said, he and his brother were picked up by the British Army on a road outside town, put into a helicopter, and blindfolded. "And they flew over our own field—I didn't know this till after—and they told us they were going to shoot us and dump us. They wanted to know names of people and what people were doing, blaming us for being in the IRA—'Certainly your grandfather and you're all in it' and all this carry-on—but they were hovering. And I was on my back in the body of the Wessex, and all I could see was the night sky. Every time I'd move my head, I'd get a thump. They were only hovering three feet above the ground, but I couldn't see. They took the

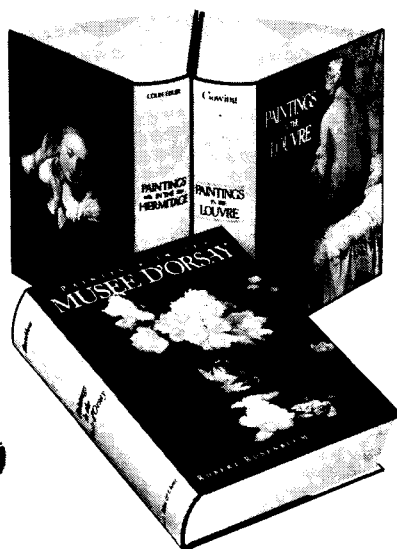


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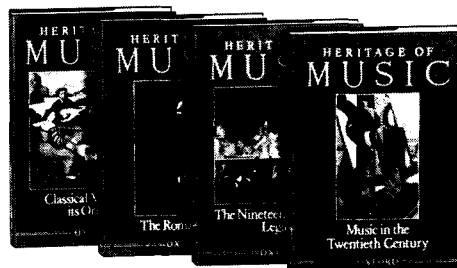
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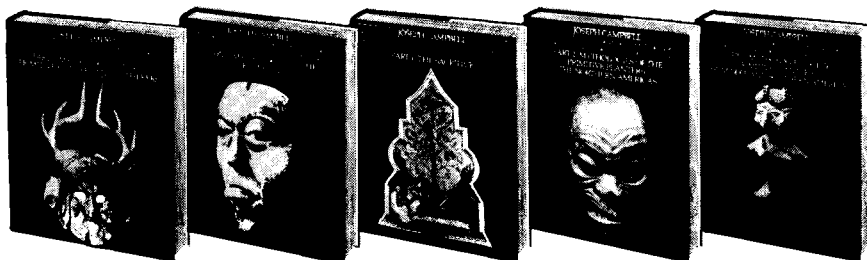
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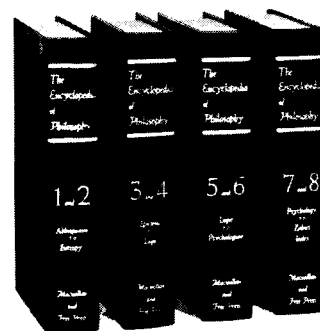


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blindfold off me, giving me enough room to see my brother standing on the edge of the helicopter with a blindfold on. I could see him and the two hands behind him. I said, 'I know nothing! I know nothing! I know nothing!' and he just pushed him out. And I let out a roar and pissed myself—I thought he was dead. Next minute I could hear our boy laughing. He says, 'The bastards are in their own field.' They laughed and pushed me out and flew off."

This man told me that he still comes through the checkpoint, and he has

no minister of anything." Cuddy is fifty-two and has lived in Coronation Park for twenty-three years. "I've served in the Royal Air Force nine years, and I'm subject to this treatment because of my religion, nothing else."

A middle-aged Catholic who has lived in the project for nearly forty years agreed to talk to me, but only anonymously. "I own a couple of farms on the other side of the border," he said. "I'm constantly stopped because I go back and forth on the tractor. I have seen others beaten. I even saw a

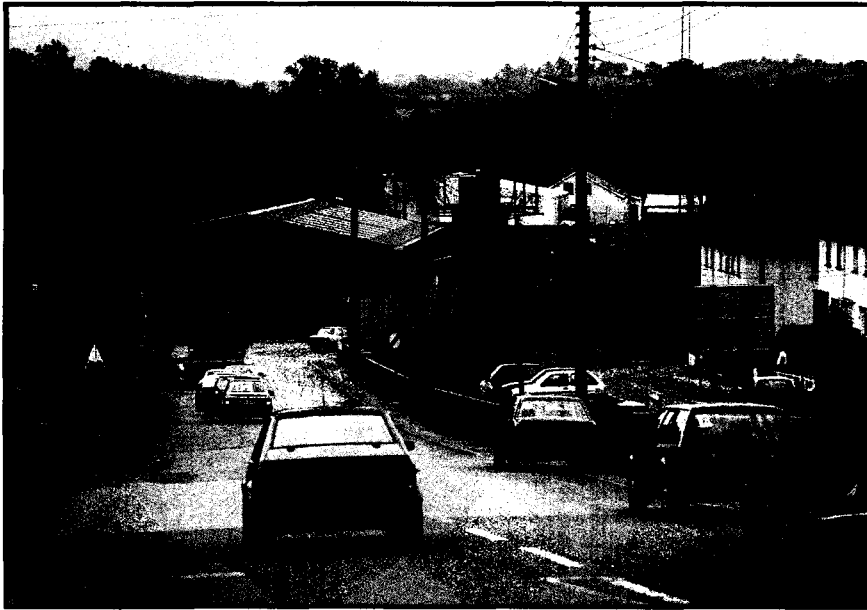
encounter. The soldiers often threatened to kill him. Eamon Boyle, a family friend, told me he was driving in the country one night with Aidan's father, John McAnespie, when soldiers stopped them at a checkpoint. After looking at John's driver's license, one soldier asked about Aidan, and then said, "You tell him we're gonna get him. You tell him to keep his head down, that we'll definitely get him." "That was a year before they actually done it," Boyle said.

Father Brendan McHugh came to Aughnacloy as the parish priest in 1982, when Aidan was seventeen. "He used to get a lot of harassment," Father McHugh recalls, "and it went on and on and on."

"He came to me at times about the treatment he was getting, the language they were using, what they were threatening at times, because they did threaten, you see, that they would beat him up, that they would shoot him—I'm saying that they did threaten that many times, *many times*, now. At the end, he used to say, 'I know, Father, you're tired of listening to me telling you this,' and I would say, 'Aidan, I know what you're about before you start,' and I would listen to him. I used to tell him to be quiet. 'Answer their questions as far as you think they're entitled to ask them, and just keep on going. And we'll see who has the greatest courage—them or you.' It was my impression, and the impression of a great many others, that they wanted him to run. They would have loved for him to go off to County Monaghan and stay there, out of their way, so to speak. Then they'd have been satisfied. But he didn't do that. He stayed going back and forth. I never expected it would end the way it did."

**J**UST HOW Aidan McAnespie's life ended is still a mystery. The soldier who was charged, David Jonathan Holder, eighteen years old, told the court that the general-purpose machine gun in question was always loaded with a belt of fifty rounds. That morning two NCOs arrived for inspection and asked Holder about rust on the barrel. He said he was given the gun to clean and oil. Someone else then reloaded it and put it back on its stand, just as Aidan McAnespie started to walk through the checkpoint.

Holder noticed that the gun was



*The British Army checkpoint near the Coronation Park housing development*

had a rough time of it. "One night they stuck a rifle in my mouth. Told me they were going to blow my head away. And I just laughed at them. What was I going to do? If he was going to shoot me, he was going to shoot me. You tell people that, they won't believe you. 'The police wouldn't do that,' or 'The UDR wouldn't do this.' They have no idea what they do."

The checkpoint itself sits very near a small, cramped public-housing project called Coronation Park, a somewhat ironic name in that the project is inhabited mostly by Catholics, who tend to be Irish nationalists. A camera is trained on the houses, and in the early days the residents could turn on their sets and see themselves on TV.

"We live in an open prison," said Aidan Cuddy, one of the few residents of the project who was willing to speak to me and let his name be used. "Nobody can tell me different, no politician or

groom beaten. There was a wedding, and the bride and groom were pulled in. They beat him up, and the blood spattered all over her white dress, and the whole wedding group was in a state of riot." One of those he saw beaten, he said, was Aidan McAnespie. "I remember once in July, 1987. They pulled him out of the car. I was beside him on a tractor. They took him out of the car and stood on him and pulled his shoes off him and pulled off his sweater. I wasn't close enough to hear what they said. He tried to run to me. I kept shouting, 'That isn't necessary!' I tried to go to him, but they blocked my path."

Aidan McAnespie routinely answered the police and soldiers with silence, and it enraged them. I knew his family, and I can remember Aidan coming into the kitchen of his sister's house, a few minutes from the checkpoint, ashen and shaken after one such

pointing away from the high ground to his left, where attacks generally came from, and decided to move the gun. He lifted it, putting his hand, still wet from the cleaning, over the trigger guard. At that moment, he said, his finger slipped onto the trigger, and the gun went off, firing several bullets. Police investigators told the press that one bullet ricocheted off the road and struck McAnespie.

Under British law the autopsy and all investigative details have been kept secret. As part of the Irish investigation McAnespie's body was exhumed and underwent a second autopsy, conducted by Dr. John Harbison, the Irish state pathologist. The part of the breastbone and rib cage that Harbison most needed, however, was missing. He initially concluded from the shape of the bullet holes that the victim had been shot from the front—not the back—and that the circular entry wound on his chest could not have come from a ricochet. These observations, reported by the McAnespie family doctor, who attended the second au-

topsy, correspond with those of witnesses at the scene, who saw what looked like an indentation and very little blood on McAnespie's chest, and a slightly jagged wound in his back, with a lot of blood. If Irish investigators subsequently concluded, as the *Irish Press* reported, that the bullet ricocheted and the shooting was accidental, it seems likely that Dr. Harbison was given access to the missing part and changed his mind. But neither the Irish government's findings nor the judge's decision to drop charges against the accused soldier have made much difference to people in and around Aughnacloy. The unionists accept without question that it was an accident. The nationalists firmly believe that it was murder.

"I don't believe anything the British authorities tell me at all," says Anthony McGonnell, the chairman of the Killeeshil Gaelic Football Club, which was to play the Aughnacloy club the day McAnespie was killed. "The general consensus would be that Aidan McAnespie was wantonly shot dead."

"Whether this was an accident at Aughnacloy or whether it was a deliberate thing, certainly one sure thing is we'll never know," says Brendan Holland, a Dungannon businessman who heard the shots while driving through the checkpoint. Holland was one of the first witnesses at the scene. "We might be told," he says, "but we'd never believe it. If it was an accident, would anyone believe it, in the light of everything else that's happened? Most people won't."

IF YOU FOLLOW the Ravella road south, across the bridge and the border, you will soon come to Clara, the small town where Elizabeth McAnespie was born. The road ends a few yards from the cemetery at St. Patrick's, where her son is buried.

They chose Clara, the family explains, so that Aidan's brothers could tend his grave. Engraved on his tombstone is the symbol from the SPIRIT OF FREEDOM button he wore: a lark caught in barbed wire.

—Jo Thomas



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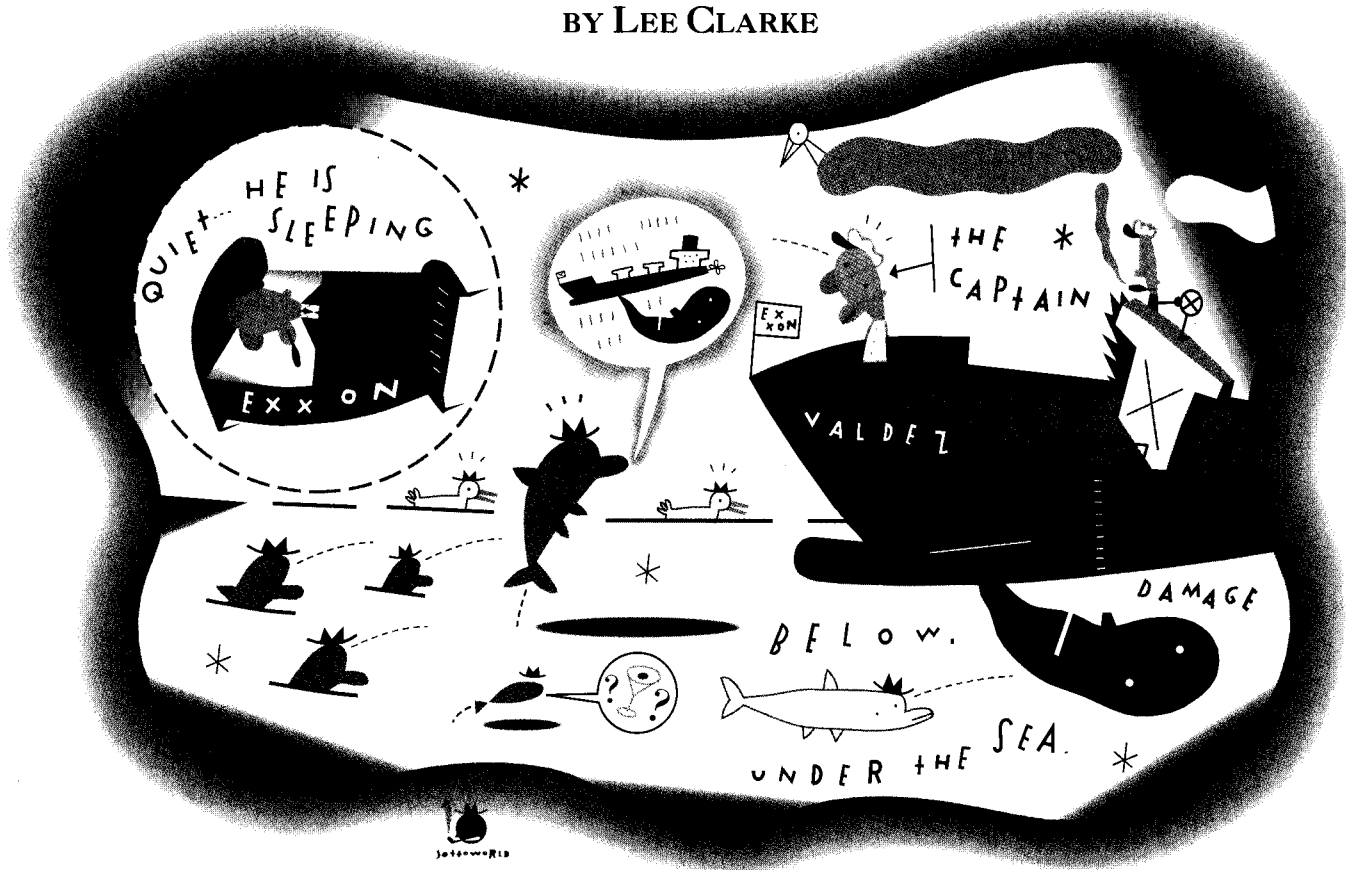


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*The Great Alaskan Oil Spill was a drama in which the main characters played out their roles according to the script for an elaborate charade—the pretense that a major oil spill can be controlled. The principal props in the charade are the “contingency” plans written to assure the public that organizations know what to do when a spill occurs or one is imminent. In real life, however, contingency plans are barely worth the paper they’re written on*

## OIL-SPILL FANTASIES

BY LEE CLARKE



**W**ITHIN HOURS OF THE EXXON VALDEZ GROUNDING, IN PRINCE WILLIAM Sound in March of last year, officers from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation were aboard the stricken vessel. To the extent possible, ADEC officials surveyed the damage and began nudging numerous bureaucracies into action. The night was dark, so officials could not tell how badly damaged the ship was, but they knew the spill would be large. “The oil

was several feet deep *on top of the water*,” an eyewitness told me (probably with some exaggeration) not long ago. “You could have put a hose in the stuff and sucked it up.” One of the first ADEC officials to board the vessel used the ship’s radiophone to awaken the terminal superintendent of Alyeska Pipeline Service, the corporation owned by the seven oil companies that oversee the Alaska pipeline. He reported that the spill was “a bad one” and advised that airplanes with oil dispersants be readied immediately. A sense of urgency, even panic, was appropriate,

because some of the airplanes and dispersants were in Arizona.

ADEC notified Alyeska first because the consortium bore the greatest organizational and legal responsibility for immediate response to an oil spill in Prince William Sound. The elements of that response are detailed in oil-spill contingency plans, particularly one written by Alyeska and approved by ADEC. Alyeska’s contingency plan called, chiefly, for two measures: the use of a containment boom (like a long curtain, partly submerged in

the water, which is strung around oil in hopes of controlling it) to hold the leaking oil for later collection with skimmers, and where collection was not possible, the deployment of aircraft with dispersants to dissipate the slick.

As is now common knowledge, both industry and government had major problems implementing Alyeska's contingency plan. Alyeska and Exxon, in particular, have been criticized, with some justification, for responding haltingly or not at all. Reportedly, Alyeska's terminal superintendent made a few calls and went back to sleep. In any case, it seems that Alyeska did not call its dispersant contractors immediately, as its plan promised. Alyeska's safety barge, the only mechanism available to transport a boom to the *Exxon Valdez*, was in drydock for repairs, and its boom was being stored in a warehouse, where it was mixed up with other gear. Reloading the boom delayed

the recovery of a significant amount of oil and the minimizing of environmental damage. According to this scenario, bumbling or confused experts and agencies failed to do the right thing.

For its part, ADEC has been charged with impeding Exxon's and Alyeska's initial efforts, especially those concerning dispersants and burning. Lawrence Rawl, Exxon's chairman of the board and chief executive officer, has said, "The basic problem we ran into was that we had environmentalists advising the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the dispersant could be toxic. . . . It was the state and the Coast Guard that really wouldn't give us the go-ahead to load those planes, fly those sorties, and get on with it." The Coast Guard, too, has been criticized for insufficiently controlling the waterways, neglecting to "federalize" the response quickly, and acting inefficiently.



the barge by at least fourteen hours. By then booming the spill was as futile as trying to contain the radioactive cloud from Chernobyl. What's more, Alyeska had only 4,000 gallons of dispersants in Valdez the day of the accident, not nearly enough to respond to a large spill. By the fourth day of what was becoming a political, environmental, and corporate crisis, 70 m.p.h. winds were whipping through Prince William Sound, making it impossible for either aircraft or watercraft to attend the *Exxon Valdez* safely. Because of the storm it was too dangerous, and too late, to dump dispersants on the oil.

The most frequent complaint from critics within the Alaska government and elsewhere has been that the spill could have been boomed effectively during the first three days after the accident, when, as an ADEC officer remarked, the waters were "as calm as glass." And if it had been boomed, the argument goes, skimmers could have been deployed and dispersants applied, resulting in

The organizations involved were in fact inadequately (or ineptly) coordinated, and spent far too much time in the first critical hours and days figuring out who was to be in charge of what, and who was to blame. One veteran of disaster response in Alaska's oil industry says, "It was as if a pilot in a 737 lost one of his engines and got on the radio to the CEO of the airline to ask what to do." A member of the Alaska Oil Spill Commission likened the organizations to the Keystone Cops. They were in fact more like a group of children at seaside, trying to empty an ocean with plastic buckets. Whatever the appropriate simile, the groups were clearly incapable of implementing available solutions constructively, let alone devising successful creative ones.

Most public arguments about the Exxon spill have centered on the implementation of contingency plans. However, a crucial point has been overlooked: even under the best of circumstances the response to the *Exxon*



*Valdez* catastrophe would have been a failure. If "success" is defined as recovering 15 percent of the oil—a very modest goal—then neither Alyeska, Exxon, the Coast Guard, ADEC, nor anyone else could possibly have claimed success.

Indeed, *oil has never been successfully contained in a major tank-ship accident, nor has a recovery operation ever been successful.* Contingency plans are little more than imaginative fictions about what people hope will happen when things go wrong. Contingency plans for major oil spills ("major" meaning more than 100,000 gallons) on the open sea are fantasy documents that organizations use to reassure others that they are in control of potentially uncontrollable situations. These plans, and the promises from experts who promote them, will remain fantastic for the foreseeable future. Although the sophistication of such plans is ever increasing, they are no closer today to

back broke, whereupon the British government declared war on the wreck. On the tenth day of the crisis eight bombers from the Royal Navy attacked their enemy, dropping 1,000-pound bombs on the crippled vessel in an attempt to burn the oil. Soon the *Torrey Canyon's* stern was aflame, and Prime Minister Harold Wilson expressed delight with the navy's proficiency. Another attack soon followed, this time by fighter jets dumping 5,000 gallons of aviation fuel on the wreck. By the end of the day eighteen tons of bombs had been dropped on the *Torrey Canyon*. Experts worried that the conflagration might be so immense as to endanger all life for miles around. Alas, even with enough flammable material to burn a small city, the fire lasted but minutes. The next day brought more of the same, with napalm added for good measure. More fires started and again failed to burn the cargo. Before the tragedy was done, many more millions of gal-



spelling out ways to fix oil spills than they were twenty-three years ago, when the first major spill from a super-tanker occurred.

### Why Oil Recovery Is All But Impossible

IN 1967 THE *TORREY CANYON*, A 975-FOOT-LONG VESSEL (the *Exxon Valdez*, now the *Exxon Mediterranean*, is 987 feet), ran aground in the English Channel with nearly 35 million gallons of oil on board. Within the first six days 6 million to 12 million gallons of the *Torrey Canyon's* cargo leaked out and, with assistance from the winds, soon blackened the Cornwall coast. (The *Exxon* spill was estimated at 11 million gallons.) As in Alaska, a boom to contain the spill was scheduled to arrive soon but didn't. For the first seven days after the stranding, salvors tried to save the ship, to no avail. One salvor died in the attempt. Then the tanker's

lons of oil had coated Brittany, where the slick earned the epithet *la marée noire*.

Having failed to burn the oil, the British dumped several million gallons of detergents on it, both at sea and on beaches and cliffs; thousands of soldiers and volunteers went to work in a cleanup operation similar to Exxon's in Alaska. The French were opposed to the large-scale use of detergents, preferring to sink the oil instead. Scientists later discovered that the detergents, themselves quite toxic, did more harm than good to the environment; also, oil driven to the bottom by sinking agents smothered bottom-dwelling organisms. (Today's dispersants are less toxic, but they break up oil into finer particles in the water. Thus, rather than ending the contamination, they make the oil more available to sea life. Scientists are trying to turn this to advantage with a developing class of genetically engineered microorganisms that can metabolize oil.) As *Oil in the Sea*, published by the National

Academy of Sciences, aptly notes, "Many of the impacts observed were due largely to the awesome cleanup efforts used and not to the spilled oil." Although no trustworthy estimates exist of the amount of *Torrey Canyon* oil that was recovered in the cleanup effort, experts agree that it was paltry.

The *Torrey Canyon* story is unusually dramatic, but its outline is typical of spills and cleanups of that magnitude. In 1968, for example, the *General Colocotronis* spilled more than 2 million gallons of crude oil off Eleuthera, in the Bahamas. In 1969 an oil-well blowout dumped at least 1.3 million gallons into the waters near Santa Barbara, California, little of which was recovered. In 1970 the *Arrow* spilled 2.5 million gallons of oil into Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia, most of which luckily was swept out to sea. In 1976 the *Argo Merchant* disgorged onto the Nantucket shoals, off Massachusetts, about 7.5 million gallons, much of which stayed on the surface, turned into petroleum pancakes, and floated into the Atlantic. In 1978 the *Amoco Cadiz* lost 68 million gallons, contaminating 180 miles of Brittany, with much of the oil turning into a gooey, long-lasting, and toxic "mousse." In 1979 and 1980 the Ixtoc I well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico bled from 130 to 430 million gallons of oil over a nine-month period; optimistic estimates are that 10 percent was recovered. In June of last year, just a few months after the *Exxon Valdez* grounding, three large spills occurred within twelve hours: the *World Prodigy* leaked 420,000 gallons off Narragansett, Rhode Island; a barge in the Houston Ship Channel lost 250,000 gallons; and the *Presidente Rivera* spilled 800,000 gallons into the Delaware River. This year the *American Trader* spilled 400,000 gallons near Huntington Beach, California.

In all these calamities only the cleanup of the *General Colocotronis* spill could be considered even a qualified success. After the *Colocotronis*, which was under charter to Humble Oil, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon), ran aground, a dramatic lightering operation ("lightering" is transferring cargo to another vessel) retrieved nearly 3.5 million of 5.5 million gallons of

oil in the ship's cargo, though the ship ultimately had to be scuttled. The best estimates are that "only" 14 to 20 percent of the *Colocotronis*'s oil spilled, polluting "only" a few miles of beach because most of the oil blew out to sea. Even if one considers this a success story, human intervention had little to do with

minimizing the damage. Luck, plainly, is our most effective guardian against shoreline contamination from major spills.

Were all these cases overloaded with conditions that hindered effective response? Perhaps they are stories of organizational and technological failure not because effective response to big spills is impossible but because conditions were simply too severe to permit any productive response: the seas were too high, the winds too violent, the catastrophe too sudden and remote. Such an argument raises the question of what would happen if conditions were more forgiving. In 1987 the Canadian Coast Guard, Environment Canada, and the Minerals Management Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior ran an experiment "to evaluate," in the words of two authors of a report on the project, "the containment and recovery capabilities of three state-of-the-art booms and skimmers."

The experiment, which cost nearly a million dollars, was run in the North Atlantic some twenty-five miles east of Newfoundland, where the researchers dumped about 20,000 gallons of oil. (They had a Canadian permit that required, among other things, westerly winds; the test was also scheduled for a season when no birds or whales would be in the area.) The plan was to contain and collect as much oil as possible. Three booms, one behind another, were to be strung around the stern of the spilling vessel. Then the skimmers would be put to work.

On the day of the experiment the sea had long swells, topped with two- to four-foot whitecaps, according to estimates (the instrument that would have measured them accurately failed), and the winds were at ten to twenty knots. By 6:45 A.M. the necessary vessels were in place, the helicopters (important for coordination) were ready



**A** CRUCIAL POINT HAS BEEN OVERLOOKED:  
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THE RESPONSE TO THE EXXON VALDEZ CATASTROPHE  
WOULD HAVE BEEN A FAILURE.

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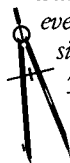
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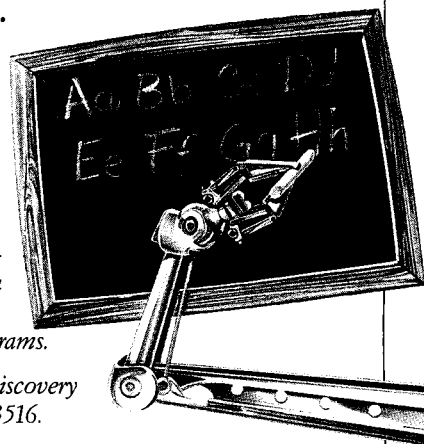
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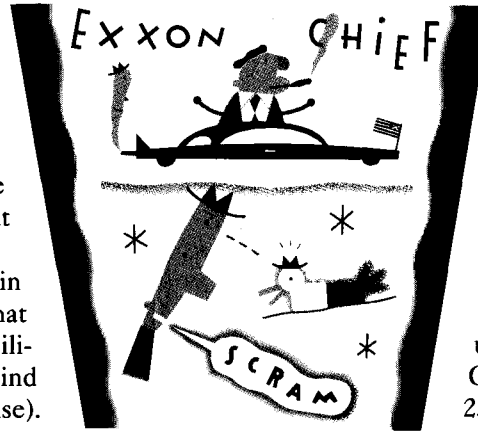
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to go, and the first line of boom was strung. By 9:00 all the oil had been released into the first line of boom. Between 9:00 and 10:00, when media representatives were allowed to watch, the experimenters tried to pull the second line of boom into place, but every attempt resulted in the boom's twisting in on itself.

By 10:30 wind was pushing oil over the first boom, and oil was leaking under it as well. Although the frequently twisting second boom was a disappointment, the authors of the report claim that all three booms were able to contain the oil, at least temporarily.

The oil was then towed around in the last boom for about an hour, so that the experimenters could test their ability to corral oil while heading into wind (they fared poorly, to no one's surprise). Then the winds stiffened a bit, to perhaps twenty knots, one of the tow boats started going too fast, and the oil was lost. The experimenters managed to get the first boom back in place and deployed the skimmers. "The first skimmer. . . was deployed and no measurable recovery was observed," according to the report. Other problems developed. Of the three types of skimmers tested, two experienced mechanical problems with the support arms that suspended them from the boat, with the result that both were "frequently submerged so that oil and water were washed into the sump of the skimmer." One of these skimmers enjoyed an "overall rate of oil recovery [of] 60 gallons per minute with unknown amounts of the recovery resulting from frequent partial submergence." As the report indicates, albeit opaquely, the skimmers were probably more useful as buckets than as vacuum cleaners. A third skimmer operated admirably during the test, recovering almost eighty-five gallons of oil a minute, though for some reason it was used only a short while before being brought back aboard. The first skimmer, which earlier in the experiment had been a complete failure, was redeployed after the oil had been treated with a chemical that made it sticky, and this time the skimmer recovered about fifty gallons a minute. Finally rough seas and a dark sky brought the experiment to an end.



Evaluations of the Newfoundland experiment were mixed and sometimes conflicting. Though the authors of the report cited above don't give an overall recovery rate, they claim that "the containment and recovery effort was one of the most successful on record." They do not, how-

ever, define success. Edward Tennyson, of the Minerals Management Service, one of the report's authors, told me he estimated recovery at 15 to 20 percent. A month after the test an official Canadian Coast Guard estimate claimed that 33 to 40 percent of the oil had evaporated and that another 33 percent had been lost to sheens, the rainbow-colored film that petroleum products leave on water's surface. The Canadian Coast Guard also claimed that 25 percent of the oil had been recovered, a truly enormous proportion for an

open-sea spill. But others in the Canadian Coast Guard, and staff members of Environment Canada, say quietly that the overall recovery rate was closer to 10 percent and consider the experiment a "gigantic flop." The literature on the experiment leads a reader to one unavoidable conclusion: even under reasonably favorable conditions, with state-of-the-art equipment, state-of-the-art chemicals, sufficient trained personnel, well-coordinated organizations, and a completely predictable time of spill, effective oil recovery is, by any reasonable definition, simply impossible. As an observer noted in Jeffrey Potter's 1973 book, *Disaster by Oil*, "It isn't that oil has a mind of its own. It's as mindless as those who spill it. The trouble is the stuff just won't cooperate."

### The Canadian Alternative

IF EFFORTS TO RECOVER OIL FROM MAJOR SPILLS ARE futile, then we need to prevent spills from occurring in the first place. The *Exxon Valdez* spill would not have happened in Prince William Sound were it not for the Alaska pipeline, through which flows nearly 25 percent of the oil produced in the United States and the source of 85 percent of Alaska's revenues. In the heady days of the late 1960s and early 1970s, after huge oil de-

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR MAJOR OIL SPILLS ON THE OPEN SEA ARE FANTASY DOCUMENTS THAT ORGANIZATIONS USE TO REASSURE OTHERS THAT THEY ARE IN CONTROL.



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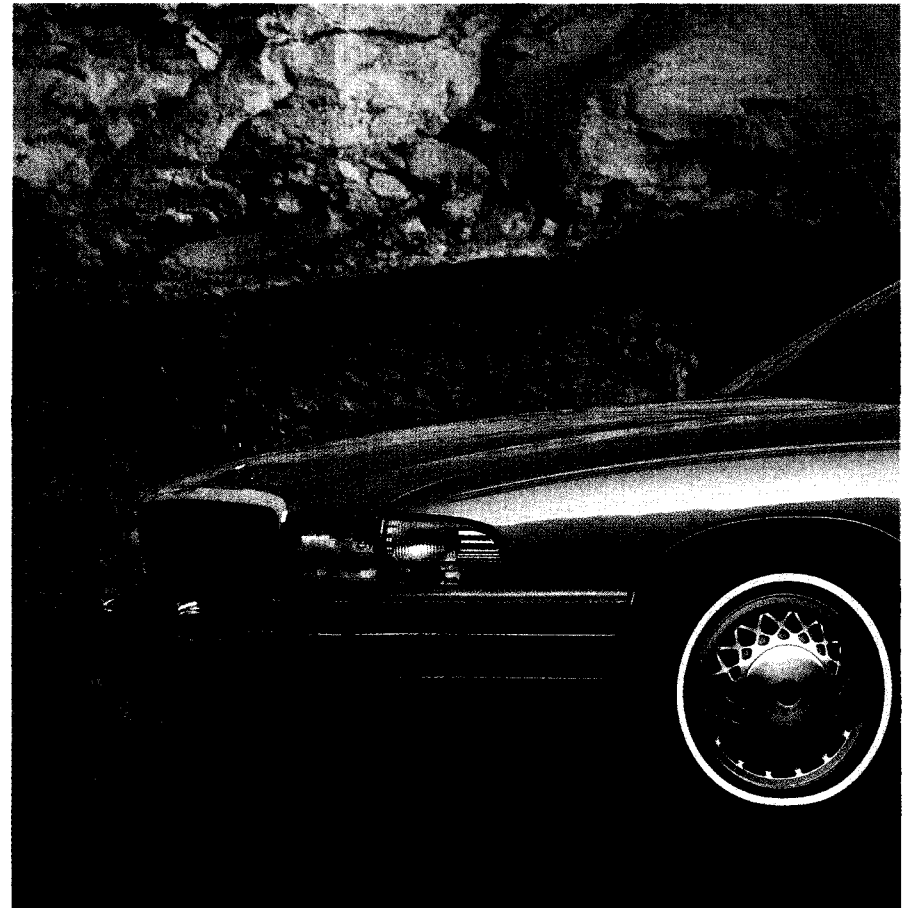
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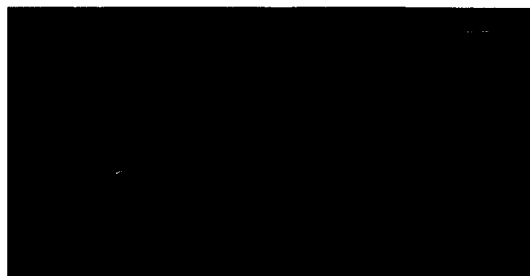
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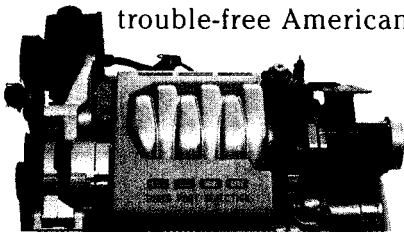




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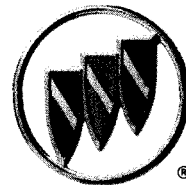


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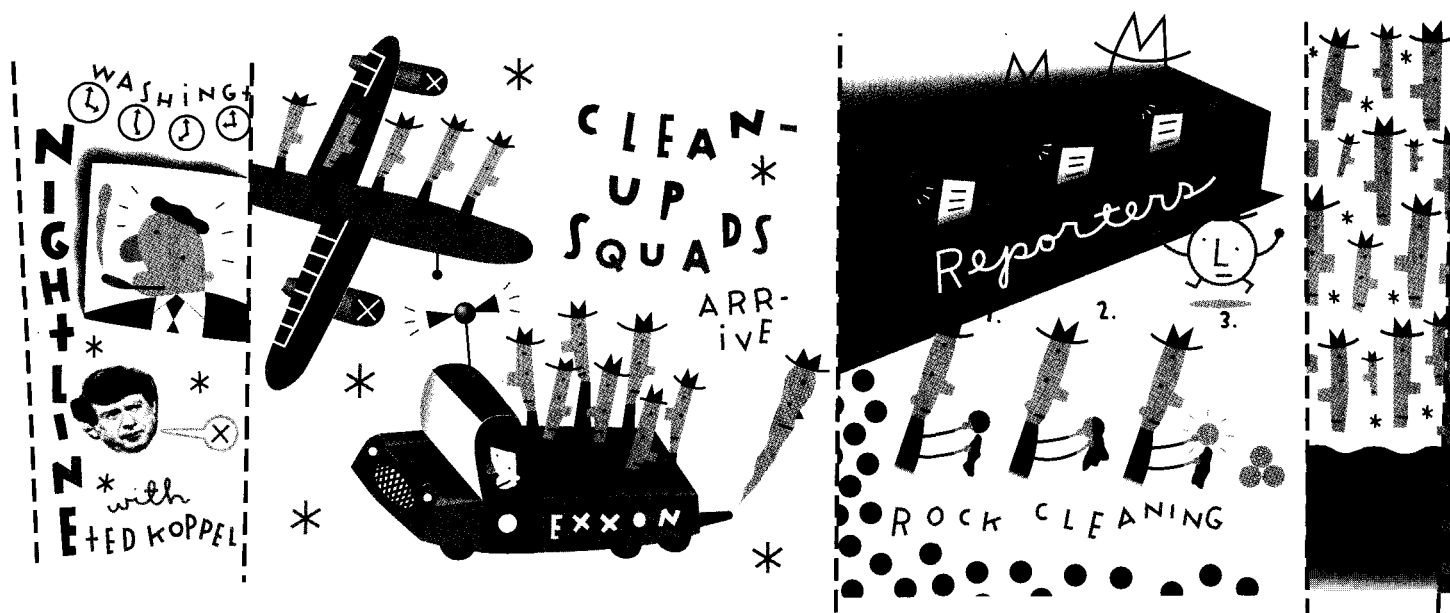
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posits were discovered but before the pipeline was constructed, little discussion took place about how the oil would be transported to refineries. Some rumblings were heard, however, to the effect that a pipeline-tanker system was not the best available method of transport. Representatives of the Sierra Club, for instance, argued that the mere presence of a trans-Alaska pipeline would spoil much of Alaska's great beauty. And other opponents pointed out that more than two thirds of the proposed route for the pipeline would lie within twenty-five miles of the recorded epicenters of major earthquakes, and that tremendous spills might result, since each mile of the 800-mile pipeline could carry about 476,000 gallons of oil at a time.

Indeed, on March 27, 1964, twenty-five years before the *Exxon Valdez* grounding, the worst North American earthquake on record had struck Prince William Sound.

The alternative to a trans-Alaska pipeline system was a trans-Canada pipeline terminating somewhere in the midwestern United States, possibly near Chicago. Such a route had much to recommend it. The segment of Canada through which the pipeline would run was seismically much less active than Alaska. Canada had already agreed to the project and had begun to facilitate construction, and indeed parts of the system, including rights-of-way, were already in place. Some economists concluded that a trans-Canada pipeline would even be more profitable than an Alaskan one. And, as environmentalists pointed out, it would completely eliminate the risk of tanker spills.

Yet the Canadian alternative was never seriously considered. The oil industry was squarely in favor of the Alaska idea, partly because it left oil transport completely under American corporate control, partly because oil



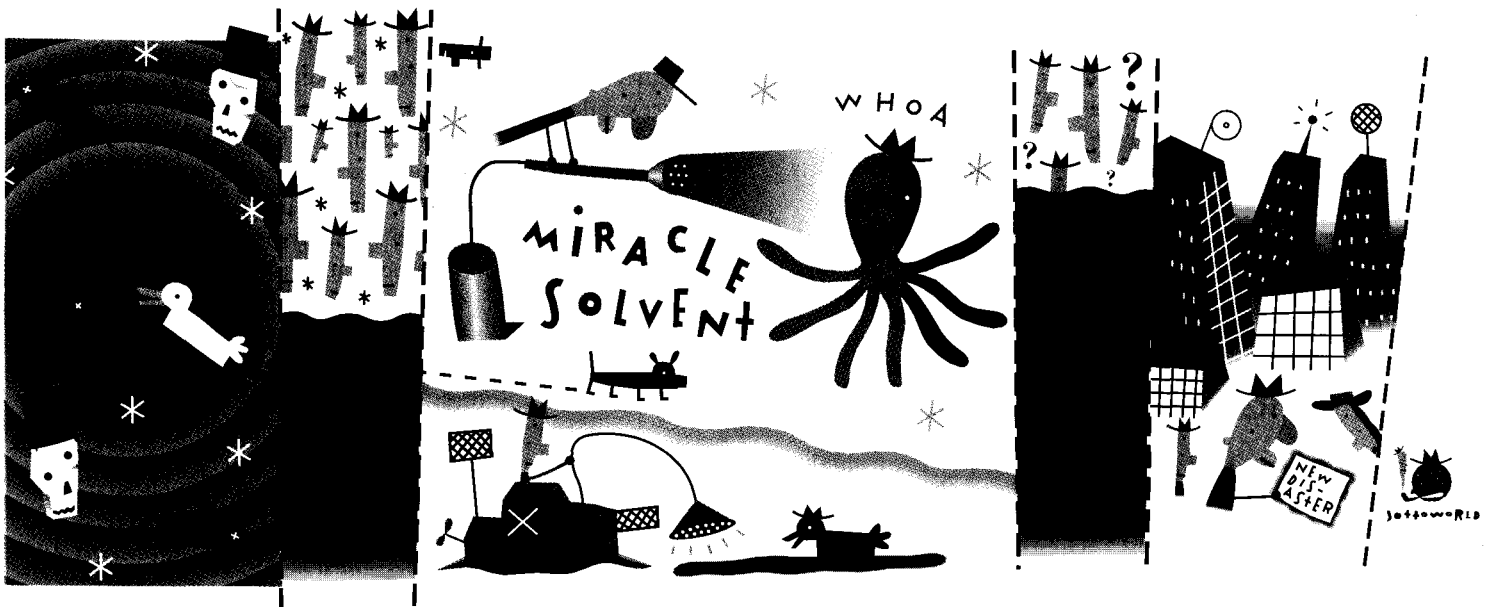
A hundred and thirty-one people died in the disaster. Registering 8.4 on the Richter scale, the "Good Friday earthquake" caused substantial ground displacement and sent forty-foot waves onto shore. Rushing water snapped spruce trees a hundred feet above the low-water mark. The earthquake wrought so much damage that the town of Valdez was moved to safer ground, three and a half miles away. Today, all that remains of old Valdez is the concrete foundation of the former post office, decorated with a plaque commemorating the dead and the forty children orphaned by the quake. The new Valdez conducts annual earthquake drills, and has drawn up plans for its response to nuclear attack, though not to oil spills. But across its harbor are eighteen storage tanks capable of holding 385 million gallons of oil. A major earthquake in the area could rupture the tanks, resulting in a spill potentially thirty-four times as large as the one from the *Exxon Valdez*.

companies wanted the option of selling to Japan (difficult to do with a midwestern terminus), and partly because the government of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was proposing increased regulation of foreign corporations operating in Canada. The U.S. Department of the Interior in 1971 prepared a draft environmental-impact statement that barely considered the Canadian possibilities; nor did the final report discuss them in detail, though it did note that "the magnitude and frequency of future seismic events [along the proposed tanker route] are qualitatively predicted to be high." In 1973 the Senate considered a bill, which had the support of President Richard Nixon, that effectively bypassed both a viable Canadian route and the National Environmental Policy Act's requirement that environmental impact be considered. The Senate vote, with two senators absent, was 49-49. Vice President Spiro Agnew cast the deciding vote, and the House passed a complementary bill soon

thereafter. Any possibility of serious debate over whether the pipeline should be built died with Agnew's vote. Construction of the pipeline began in the summer of 1974. The supertankers probably were already on order.

Although they didn't prevail, opponents of the pipeline-tanker system did force a more careful assessment of the environmental impact of the pipeline than would otherwise have been made. For instance, the oil companies initially claimed they could bury nearly all the pipeline, thus lending the impression of an undisturbed ecology. But after geologists pointed out that hot oil (oil is at 180° F when it comes out of the ground) passing through the pipeline would melt the tundra, thereby weakening the base on which the pipeline lay, the broad-scale burial plan was dropped. And Alyeska was moved to create a fifteen-volume oil-spill contingency plan, twelve volumes of which are devoted to specifying

anticipated trying to handle 250,000 barrels of oil on the water." Yet the possibility of a major oil spill in Alaska was not at all unlikely. The shipping industry loses hundreds of ships every year, although few of them are supertankers. We know roughly how many spills to expect each year (at least one involving more than 7.5 million gallons of oil, on average), and we know approximately how many tankers will founder or otherwise meet their demise. Before construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline began, officials both in the oil industry and in government acknowledged that there were risks of tanker spills and other environmental disasters. Some were even forthright. As a Humble Oil vice-president put it, "The oil is going to be extracted and some of the country hitherto unmolested is going to be torn up in the process. Let's not fool ourselves." Furthermore, explicit scenarios of grounding and spillage must have been considered in



precisely what would happen should a section of the 800-mile pipeline fail.

What is interesting, and curious, is the discrepancy between the discussion of pipeline safety and that of tanker safety. In sharp contrast to Alyeska's extensive contingency planning for the pipeline was the section of its plan that deals with Prince William Sound—248 pages, perhaps two thirds of which contain maps and lists of equipment. The plan promised much but was vague on what would actually be done in the event of a major spill. The discrepancy is curious because Prince William Sound and the Port of Valdez are precisely the places one would expect a major spill. (In the aftermath of last year's disaster, the contingency plan is of course being extensively rewritten.)

Strangely, in the original plan Alyeska claimed that a large oil spill was "highly unlikely"; last year Exxon Shipping's president, Frank Iarossi, said, "No one ever

developing the extensive regulations that concern tanker and harbor safety, and in calculating the insurance-premium rates that shippers pay. Precedent exists as well: several major and many minor spills have occurred in Alaska over the past ten years.

Tanker accidents are not rare in Alaska. In January of 1987, for example, the *Stuyvesant*, a tanker larger than the *Exxon Valdez*, encountered severe storms in the Gulf of Alaska almost immediately after leaving Valdez. The storms caused a hull fracture, resulting in the loss of over half a million gallons of North Slope crude. Luckily, none of the oil hit the shore: if it had, the spill would have been the largest in Alaska's history. After repairs, the U.S. Coast Guard inspected and recertified the *Stuyvesant*. Nine months later, in October, the same ship sustained additional structural damage, spilling 600,000 gallons of oil into the Gulf of Alaska and thus becoming responsible for both of the two largest spills off the U.S.



coast that year. Like most disasters, the second spill could have been much worse, because the *Stuyvesant* was fully loaded with 63 million gallons of oil (the *Exxon Valdez* was carrying about 55 million gallons). As with the vessel's previous spill, heavy seas and high winds (more luck) prevented oiled shorelines.

The strong reasons to expect oil catastrophes notwithstanding, no one concerned with oil-spill risks in Alaska—either in government or in industry—has developed realistic worst-case scenarios for major tanker failures in Alaskan waters. This situation is unlikely to change, in spite of the Exxon spill and in spite of the generally earnest, hardworking staffs of the various regulatory agencies. As of July of last year, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, a somewhat conflicted agency often characterized by hard-line environmentalism at the bottom and middle levels and complacency at the upper reaches, had but one officer to review all contingency plans for the entire southern half of Alaska, though the state's coastline is longer than that of all the rest of the country. "It's a lot of territory," he told me recently, and "it's virtually impossible to cover that kind of thing unless you have a hell of a big work force."

### Rethinking Oil Priorities

**H**AD EXXON SPENT ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES the \$1.3 billion it claims the spill cost, Prince William Sound might still be pristine. We will always have groundings and foundering of tankers. And given the immense economies of scale that supertankers afford, they will remain signal features of the world's seascapes. But supertankers are not as safe as they could be.

From 1964 to 1982 about 5,400 ocean voyages were completed by liquefied-natural-gas carriers, according to Leo Tasca, a senior environmental officer in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (which has a major role in responding to oil accidents in Canadian waters) and the

author of a forthcoming book on marine accidents. During that time only sixteen LNG accidents were reported, none involving fatalities and none involving a breach of the interior hull. Here containment is crucial, because an LNG tanker explosion would be a catastrophe of the

highest order: Tasca reports that some LNG tankers contain "more energy than was released in the atomic explosion at Hiroshima." LNG tankers have an excellent safety record because they have double bottoms, double sideshells, and double decks, all measures that industry claims are too expensive to implement in oil tankers (industry representatives even claim that in some cases double hulls would be dangerous). These measures are enforced in U.S. waters by the U.S. Coast Guard, which bears regulatory and legal re-

sponsibility for certifying LNG tankers seaworthy. Oil transport would be much safer if the Coast Guard were as anxious about oil spills as it is about LNG spills.

Once a major oil spill occurs, one tanker captain says, "the best thing you can do is uncork another bottle of whiskey"—a poor prescription for Captain Hazelwood, the *Exxon Valdez*'s former skipper, but a not altogether inappropriate one for the rest of us. In spite of industry pronouncements, in spite of regulators' assurances, in spite of the enormous amounts of resources expended, in spite of everyone's best intentions, contingency plans for major oil spills simply do not constitute a productive response to their subject.

A week after the Exxon spill Lawrence Rawl, of Exxon, said from his New York headquarters, "We were ready [Saturday—the spill was Friday]. We couldn't get authority to do anything until 6:45 P.M. Sunday. We needed authorization. As an oil company we can't just go out and start spraying. We feel very badly about the damage to the environment. I don't want to point fingers, but the facts are we're getting a bad rap on the delay."

Imagine what might have happened if, instead, Rawl had appeared in Valdez on the day after the spill and made the following announcement: "A great tragedy has occurred: one of our fifty-million-gallon tankers has run



**H**AD EXXON SPENT ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES THE \$1.3 BILLION IT CLAIMS THE SPILL COST, PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND MIGHT STILL BE PRISTINE.

aground on Bligh Reef. We don't yet know how much oil has been spilled, but it may be a lot. We know from experience and study that we can't do much once the oil is away from the ship. We'll never be able to collect enough of it from the water to make much of a difference. And once the oil is on the beach, washing rocks and picking up tarballs will succeed mainly in creating the false impression that we are able to clean up the mess. In fact, a gigantic cleanup might do more harm than good, because our high-pressure hot-water cleaners will disturb the shoreline's ecology, among other things. But we will do our best to keep the situation from getting worse, and so will concentrate on getting the remaining oil out of the *Exxon Valdez*. Beyond that, we will just have to wait for the ecology to repair itself, a process that could take ten to fifteen years."

Charges of callous negligence would have been far more forceful than they actually were. And demands might have been heeded to protect from development the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, an 18-million-acre expanse with perhaps 3.2 billion barrels of recoverable oil under it. Other areas, too, might have come to be more aggressively protected, including the Florida Keys; Georges Bank, off Massachusetts; and Bristol Bay, in Alaska (where drilling rights have already been leased). But telling the awful truth might have achieved a still more important result: making the public aware that large oil spills are calamities for which we are unprepared.

Ultimately, we must look to the institutions that regulate and manage oil development—rather than respond to oil spills per se—for relief. A great many interests are served under the current system of oil development, including those of the shipping and auto industries, the port authorities, the forces opposed to mass transit, and the forces opposed to government intervention in the market as a matter of principle. When catastrophic spills occur, regulators often sound like the most strident of environmentalists. But when the media aren't training a spotlight on them, regulators and industry operate more like partners than like opponents. As Wesley Marx, the author of several books on ocean pollution, points out, "Oftentimes, regulatory agencies seek critical advice and assistance from the very industry being regulated. In this schizophrenic climate, the oil industry is able to take its lumps in public, remaining confident that it will retain the last word in shaping its own standard of conduct."

But not only standards of conduct are being shaped in these debates over the risks of oil development. The values being defended are ones of technical competence and of "national interest," which is perhaps the most persuasive of all principles in terms of its ability to confer legitimacy and hence attract political support. An alternative line of argument, often used by environmentalists and some ecology experts, assumes some pristine state of nature as its moral and political point of departure. Nature is presented in vivid contrast to technology and hu-

man institutions: nature is true, this reasoning declares, while institutions and technology are false. The problem from this point of view is that society is not structured in accordance with "environmental values," values that are somehow consonant with ecological, natural constraints. Toxic dangers are risk games, with defenders of and challengers to established positions. The defenders and challengers use different rhetoric to win adherents to their positions. Winners of risk games gain the right to define the terms of debate, to name the problem for others, thereby shaping the vocabulary of argument within which controversy ensues. Were the ecology-minded challengers to win the game of naming the risk of oil development, the debate would likely revolve around issues of "health hazards," "the environmental crisis," and "conflict between public interest and private profit." We cannot be sure that such a redirection of the terms of debate would enhance safety. It would, however, do away with the idea that oil spills are innocent until proved guilty.

But the winners of the debate about oil development have been those who favor production over conservation, and so it has been conducted in terms of "national security." Manuel Lujan, President Bush's Secretary of the Interior, represented the received view in posing the following questions when the House restricted offshore drilling for a year in the aftermath of the Exxon spill: "Do we want to become increasingly reliant on foreign supplies and foreign tankers for oil that this country must have? Or do we want instead to rely on our own capacity to safely produce and distribute our own oil?" This argument, it bears pointing out, has been used extensively since before Teapot Dome. It permits only one answer. Once such rhetoric is allowed to frame the national discussion of oil spills, opposing views become downright un-American. Thus does the national interest become equated with the well-being of major oil companies.

National interest, however, can be conceived in a way that doesn't resonate with the notion that enthusiastically supporting private oil development is a patriotic duty. If oil is a central national-security issue—and our oil addiction makes it one—then we may very well wish to protect it, rather than exploit it.

We probably will not put an end to the enormous efforts that go into planning for oil spills, because too many political and organizational interests depend on perpetuating an illusion of control. Our dependence on oil grows unabated; conservation becomes a priority item on big political agendas only when oil production is threatened by instability or upheaval among the oil-producing nations. As oil prices rise—and they inevitably will—production will increase, more tankers will be built, and more tankers will make unintended deliveries to the sea. The least we can do is demand a forthright discussion of the risks of oil development, and the inevitable disasters we will be asked to absorb. □

*Call it Huck Finn's law:  
The authentic American flourishes in  
spite of schooling, not because of it. As applied,  
this has meant that American kids  
have one of the shortest school years in the Western  
world. It shows. Today what Huck Finn  
didn't know would hurt him*

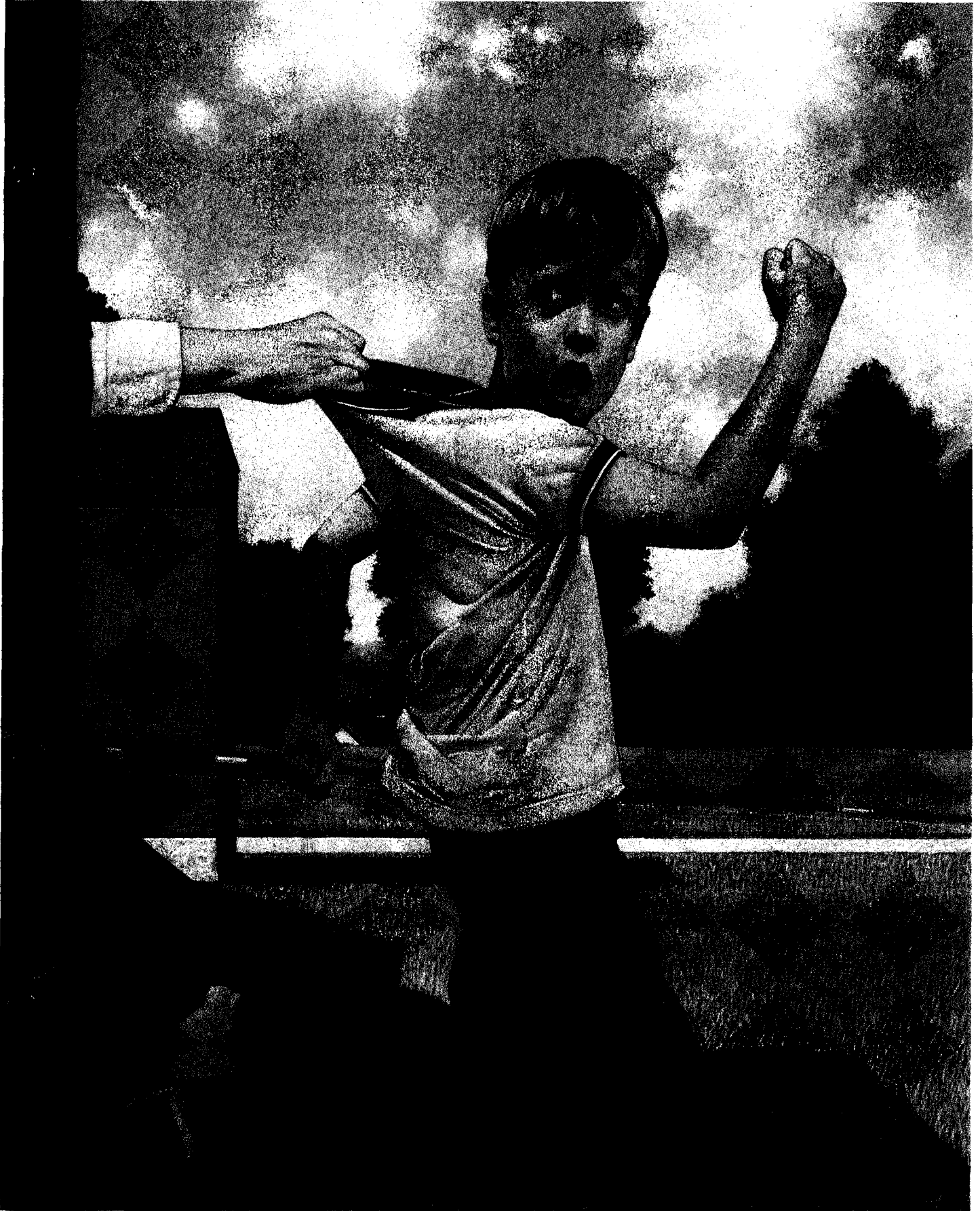
# THE CASE FOR MORE SCHOOL DAYS

BY MICHAEL J. BARRETT

**O**FF AND ON FOR THE SURPRISING STRETCH OF FORTY YEARS, BEGINNING IN 1949, the Gallup organization has polled the American public on the delicate subject of whether to lengthen the school year. For many years, though the wording of the question changed, the results held steady: by substantial margins people indicated that they did not like the idea. Even in 1959, during the era of *Sputnik* and intensified concern over what young Americans were learning, 67 percent of those polled were opposed to "increasing the number of days per year spent in school" for high school students, while a mere 26 percent were in favor.

In the 1980s something different began to happen. In line with the growing concern about economic competitiveness, Gallup retooled the question to make explicit comparisons with other countries. Interviewees were told that students in some nations attend school for as many as 240 days a year, compared with 180 in the United States. In light of this, Gallup asked, how do you feel about extending the school year by thirty days, to a total of 210? In 1984, fifty percent were against, 44 percent approved—a finding that, however consistent with past opposition, showed a distinct narrowing of the gap. In 1989 came the breakthrough. A new question maintained the comparative focus: "In some nations students spend about 25% more time in school than do students in the U.S. Would you favor or oppose increasing the amount of time that students in this community spend in school?" Forty-eight percent said they were in favor,







44 percent said they were opposed, and eight percent were undecided.

Read together, these figures record a sea change in public feeling, but the dike has not exactly burst; state legislatures and local school committees have not rushed to do anything dramatic. I can offer a personal perspective on the reasons why. As a Massachusetts state legislator, I discuss education with parents, children, and teachers, and as someone who believes in the need for a dramatic extension of the school year, I hold up the unpopular end of many conversations. Education involves matters intimately familiar to people—their kids, the rhythms of family life, their own memories of school—and everybody has an opinion.

Asked how she and her neighbors would feel about lengthening the school year, a constituent of mine, a parent of three school-aged daughters, stiffens and says, "People don't want their options taken away from them. They want freedom of choice in these things." A student just out of high school, told about the long school year in Japan, says, "I don't want to be Japanese. I like my summers. I work hard enough as it is."

If these soundings and others like them are any guide, America's attachment to the 180-day school year is still strong. In a world already reeling from future shock, the notion of extending the year seems punitive, an assault on the idea of summer itself. It raises the specter of joyless cramming. It implies that American parents have somehow failed their children.

Still, with people worried about the direction of the country, the strength of the economy, and the emerging competition from our friends in Europe and Asia, it is

time to give the matter another look. It is time, too, to examine the peculiarly American roots of the dug-in resistance to change, and to consider how, in an era of short money and diminished confidence in government, the switch to a longer school year might be achieved.

The accumulating data on comparative education, itself a relatively new preoccupation of policy specialists, point up two trends. First, compared with their peers in Asian and European countries, American students stand out for how little they work. Second, compared with Asians and Europeans, American students stand out for how poorly they do.

### Bottom Dogs

AS TO THE FIRST: CONSIDER A LIST, GARNERED from a variety of sources, of the varying number of days in a standard school year. This list was hard to put together—which tells us something about the neglect of this subject in U.S. educational circles.

|               |         |                      |            |
|---------------|---------|----------------------|------------|
| Japan         | 243     | New Zealand          | 190        |
| West Germany  | 226–240 | Nigeria              | 190        |
| South Korea   | 220     | British Columbia     | 185        |
| Israel        | 216     | France               | 185        |
| Luxembourg    | 216     | Ontario              | 185        |
| Soviet Union  | 211     | Ireland              | 184        |
| Netherlands   | 200     | New Brunswick        | 182        |
| Scotland      | 200     | Quebec               | 180        |
| Thailand      | 200     | Spain                | 180        |
| Hong Kong     | 195     | Sweden               | 180        |
| England/Wales | 192     | <b>United States</b> | <b>180</b> |
| Hungary       | 192     | French Belgium       | 175        |
| Swaziland     | 191     | Flemish Belgium      | 160        |
| Finland       | 190     |                      |            |

Of course, bare counts of school days do not tell us everything we might like to know about academic calendars. Japan's Ministry of Education, Science and Culture prescribes a minimum of 210 calendar days of classroom instruction, including half-days on Saturdays. Local school boards have the option of adding more time, and typically call for a total of about 240 days, often using the bulk of the additional days for field trips, sports activities, student festivals, and graduation ceremonies. In the United States the 180-day school year must accommodate field trips, school-wide assemblies, in-service training for teachers, and anything else that needs doing, reducing the real number of days of classroom instruction to something considerably less than 180.

The gap in classroom time between Japan and the United States widens when student attendance at *juku* is taken into account. *Juku* are the private, profit-making tutorial services that have become ubiquitous in Japan since the 1970s. Operating after school and on weekends—but in such a way as to parallel the regular education system—they provide enrichment, preparatory, remedi-





**THE ACCUMULATING DATA ON COMPARATIVE EDUCATION POINT UP TWO TRENDS. FIRST, COMPARED WITH THEIR PEERS IN ASIAN AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AMERICAN STUDENTS STAND OUT FOR HOW LITTLE THEY WORK. SECOND, COMPARED WITH ASIANS AND EUROPEANS, AMERICAN STUDENTS STAND OUT FOR HOW POORLY THEY DO.**

al, and cram courses to an education-hungry young population. By ninth grade more than 47 percent of Japanese students attend *juku*, averaging five hours a week in addition to regular school time.

Presumably, multinational counts of days of instruction will be refined, in time, to provide more detail. In the meantime, an observer might note several things about the list presented above. Highly ranked are Japan, West Germany, South Korea, and Israel, four nations noted for their discipline and drive. Hungary, an Eastern-bloc country whose quality of education has not received much attention in the West, also asks for a good deal of time from its students. Swaziland and Nigeria, members of the Third World, are reasonably demanding. And the United States, which has been known to celebrate its own capacity for discipline and drive, comes in near the bottom. Conceivably such an order of finish supports the cherished American idea that the Japanese have a deviant propensity to work harder than almost anyone else. In any event, it certainly supports the idea that Americans have a deviant propensity to work less than almost anyone else.

That there should be an identifiable American school year at all is remarkable in itself. The federal system in the United States is supposed to encourage variety, in line with the famous dictum by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis: "There must be power in the States and the Nation to remould, through experimentation, our economic practices and institutions to meet changing social and economic needs. . . . It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous State may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country."

State law, rather than any act of Congress, governs the number of days that a given school system is open. Brandeis would approve, we may assume. But no single courageous state with a choosy citizenry has undertaken to remold its schools to meet changing social and economic needs. Instead, conformity rules with an iron hand. According to the Education Commission of the States, fully

forty-six of the fifty states mandate school years of 175 to 180 days or the equivalent number of hours. One state requires just over 180; three require under 175.

The lack of variety is all the more extraordinary given that state law typically prescribes the number of school days as a minimum. This means that thousands of towns, cities, counties, and independent school districts in the United States are legally free, sometimes subject to state review, to extend the school year—to, say, somewhere within the West German range of 226 to 240 days. Yet to judge from the available literature, across the entire range of American education, embracing the fifty states and the thousands of subdivisions within those states, nary a public school system has broken the mold in a lasting way. Occasional reports, scattered sightings, are made of useful but tentative experiments. Beginning



with the 1988–1989 academic year two inner-city elementary schools in New Orleans have operated on a 220-day calendar, and this past spring the Stanley elementary school in Kansas City, Kansas, won an RJR Nabisco Foundation grant to add forty-six days to its school year. Presumably these are approximations of the European and Asian models, involving more classroom instruction for everybody. They are also precarious, with no permanent basis in law, no institutionalized existence in the local community, and no long-term funding mechanisms.



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Elsewhere we find programs built on the traditional notion of summer school, either for remedial purposes or for enrichment, with participation voluntary except for students who fail courses. These represent valuable extensions of educational time, but when attendance is significantly less than 100 percent of the class, the regular curriculum cannot be lengthened and enriched without throwing the next fall's semester into chaos.

Some will maintain that uniformity is a boon to the mobile American family, as it moves from community to community and state to state. But a uniform school year does not provide a uniform education, or anything like it, because the curriculum varies from place to place. The mobile American family is guaranteed a generous, mobile summer vacation, but that is it.

### Quantity Into Quality

**I**N THE 1960S THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) began to tackle the thorny problem of assessing educational quality across the gulfs of nationality, language, and culture. The undertaking, enormous in its complexity, produced the first installments of a multinational data base on how the world's children are doing in mastering the common languages of the emerging world economy: mathematics and the sciences.

When the IEA conducted its most recent mathematics assessment, in 1981–1982, the results were disheartening for Americans. In an eighth-grade match-up, among twenty school systems surveyed, the American students ranked tenth in arithmetic, twelfth in algebra, and sixteenth in geometry. Japan, our principal economic competitor, finished first in all three of these categories. In an

intimation of the economic times that might lie ahead, Hungarian students finished ahead of Americans in all three categories. Even Thailand, until recently considered a Third World country rather than a member of the thriving Pacific rim, saw its students finish ahead of the Americans in geometry.

These international comparisons have attracted their share of critics. For example, one point commonly made is that secondary education in the United States is universal—that the system is open to all children, with 1988 figures showing that 71 percent of those who begin high school go on to graduate—while systems elsewhere are closed or elite, with a consequent creaming effect that inflates test scores.

The universality of American education is, in fact, a great potential strength. Self-congratulation is not in order, however. Other nations, including Japan, currently set the pace for universality. According to 1984 figures from the U.S. Department of Education, 88 percent of Japanese students who began high school went on to graduate. Moreover, in part because of a tendency to “track” students into either academic or vocational channels, and in part because of the unevenness of the curriculum in our peculiarly decentralized educational network, the U.S. system winds up being inclusive without necessarily being either egalitarian or first-rate. As one aspect of its 1981–1982 study, the IEA identified twelfth-grade students from various countries who were engaged in the serious study of mathematics, defined for the United States as those in classes requiring as prerequisites at least two years of algebra and one year of geometry. By such a definition a strikingly small proportion of the American student body qualified for this part of the study. According to the IEA, a serious mathematics education was provided to 50 percent of Hungarian students,

## PATIO

I count the bricks  
(Each pairing clicks),  
Count the space  
I need to make  
To hold four chairs,  
A plate of pears,  
And a table of wood  
On which the plate  
Can sit.

To this green shade  
I won't admit  
Defeat, or heat,  
Or an angry clock  
Outraged at having  
No time to tell,  
Or love embarrassed  
Because unanswered,  
Or men political  
And thick.

Bricks and dirt,  
Sand and shade,  
The thirsty maples  
Still in our service—  
Is this how the word  
Turns into flesh,  
No paten raised  
But a summer yard,  
One child hiding  
Deep in forsythia,  
The other boldly  
Waiting to be born?

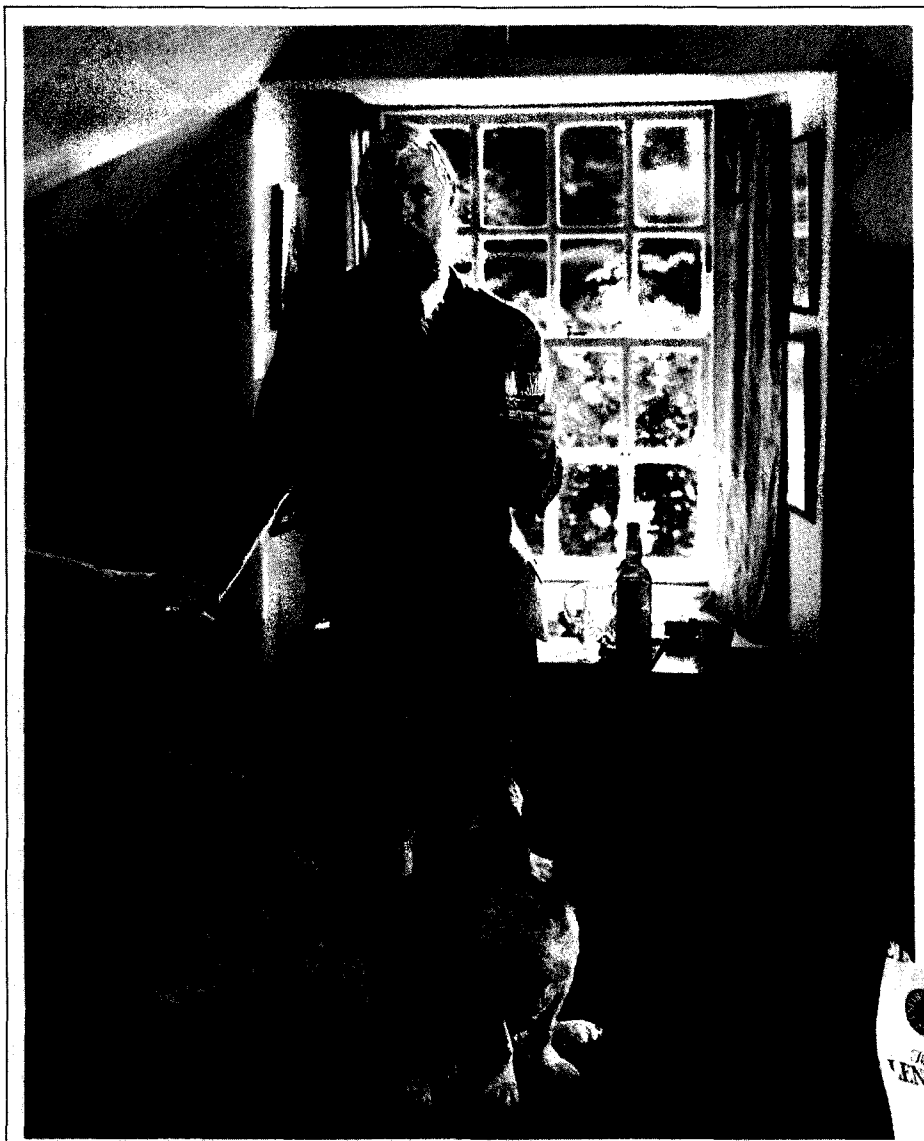
—Christopher Jane Corkery





*"If you cannot drink The Glenlivet  
the correct way, I beg you  
to drink some other Scotch."*

—Sandy Milne,  
our Resident Sage.



Sandy Milne sampling the goods.



— What is a single malt Scotch? —

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a *château-bottled* wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

At the pinnacle of Scotches sit the single malt whiskies. Slightly above them sits The Glenlivet, the father of them all.

At this topmost level of Scotch, there is a ritual to the drinking of it.

"Ice massacres the smooth, mellow taste," says our Sandy Milne somewhat testily. "So, no ice. All you want is a drop or two of water to bring out the 'nose,' or aroma. Spring water, if you've got it. Cool, not cold. And use a fine crystal glass, gently warmed in a cupped hand to release the full bouquet.

"Save the ice cubes and big splashes of water for other Scotch," advises Sandy, "where it hardly matters a hoot."



**The Glenlivet.**  
**The Father of All Scotch.**



**THE UNITED STATES FACES A TIME-IN-SCHOOL DEFICIT EVERY BIT AS SERIOUS AS THE TRADE DEFICIT AND THE BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS PROBLEM: EACH YEAR, AMERICAN CHILDREN RECEIVE HUNDREDS OF HOURS LESS SCHOOLING THAN MANY OF THEIR EUROPEAN OR ASIAN MATES, AND THE RESULTING HARM PROMISES TO BE CUMULATIVE AND LASTING.**

30 percent of students in British Columbia, 15 percent of Finnish students—but only 13 percent of students in the United States.

Defenders of the status quo also argue a contrary point: not that the United States does well by its great mass of students but that our best students achieve as much as any in the world. Quite apart from the irony of a 200-year-old democracy's arguing in terms of the performance of its elites, the data give defenders shaky grounds for hope. Keeping in mind that the American contingent in the IEA's comparison of serious twelfth-grade math students is only 13 percent of the relevant U.S. age group, consider a representative portion of the results for three subjects:

**Student Achievement by Subject Area**  
(U.S. 12th-Grade Equivalent)

| Advanced Algebra     | Functions/Calculus   | Geometry             |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Hong Kong         | 1. Hong Kong         | 1. Hong Kong         |
| 2. Japan             | 2. Japan             | 2. Japan             |
| 3. Finland           | 3. England/Wales     | 3. England/Wales     |
| 4. England/Wales     | 4. Finland           | 4. Sweden            |
| 5. Flemish Belgium   | 5. Sweden            | 5. Finland           |
| 6. Israel            | 6. New Zealand       | 6. New Zealand       |
| 7. Sweden            | 7. Flemish Belgium   | 7. Flemish Belgium   |
| 8. Ontario           | 8. Ontario           | 8. Scotland          |
| 9. New Zealand       | 9. Israel            | 9. Ontario           |
| 10. French Belgium   | 10. French Belgium   | 10. French Belgium   |
| 11. Scotland         | 11. Scotland         | 11. Israel           |
| 12. British Columbia | 12. United States    | 12. United States    |
| 13. Hungary          | 13. Thailand         | 13. Hungary          |
| 14. United States    | 14. Hungary          | 14. British Columbia |
| 15. Thailand         | 15. British Columbia | 15. Thailand         |

The students were tested in three other areas of mathematics as well. The results were similar to those above, with the United States finishing below the average across the board.

In an alternative effort to measure the performance of elites, the IEA calculated the average achievement score of the top one percent of the twelfth-graders in each country. The United States came out as the lowest of any country for which data were available. In other words, our most able students scored lower in algebra than their top-notch peers in any other country. The findings were

little better in calculus, for which the same analysis was conducted.

The IEA did a science assessment in 1983–1986. Among ten-year-olds in fifteen countries where tests were conducted, the Americans ranked eighth. Confirming indications in other studies that American students fall further behind with every passing year in school, our fourteen-year-olds were in a three-way tie, with students from Singapore and Thailand, for fourteenth place among students from seventeen countries. In yet another attempt to evaluate our elites, the IEA surveyed the scores of a special group of secondary school pupils who could be considered advanced science students: seniors pursuing a second year of study within a particular discipline. In rankings with similar students from twelve other nations, the Americans placed eleventh in chemistry, ninth in physics, and last in biology.

The association between American effort and American results is illuminated by "Opportunity to Learn" studies, which seek to identify the material that has actually been taught to various groups of students and the proportion of the intended curriculum that the teacher has managed to cover. OTL researchers focus on a practical question that puzzles parents and students all over America: Why is it that no class ever seems capable of actually getting through its textbook, or even coming close? Why is so much material covered in a rush, in the closing weeks of the year? Granted, books are big in order to give teachers a choice of lessons, but the sheer volume of material left uncovered is disquieting. Accompanied by Chris Berner, a member of my staff, I was recently "teacher for a day" in a seventh-grade class in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was the end of the school year. Students reported that they had reached page 126 of a 400-page math text. They were halfway through the social-studies book.

The IEA's data on international math achievement become a little less perplexing when analyzed in accord with OTL principles. OTL researchers asked the students from each country who took part in the exercise, Had the mathematics required to answer each question on the international exam been taught to them at any time in class? The findings were fascinating. The typical Japanese twelfth-grade student had been taught how to solve 92 percent of the problems on the tests for algebra, geometry, and calculus. In England and Wales the comparable figure was 85 percent, in Hungary 67 percent, in Thailand 63 percent—and in the United States only 54 percent.

It seems, then, that students in other countries master more material largely because they get further along in their courses. OTL analysis lends authority to a conclusion that the lay person might reach as a matter of common sense: imperfect as American education might be, forty or so more days of it a year would mean more material covered and more material learned. The United States faces a time-in-school deficit every bit as serious as the trade deficit and the balance-of-payments problem: each year, American children receive hundreds of hours less schooling than many of their European or Asian mates, and the resulting harm promises to be cumulative and lasting.

### Huck Finn's Law

**I**F THE INTERNATIONAL DATA LOOK BLEAK AND OTL analysis points to a lack of learning time as crucial, the question must be asked, Why, when our students do so badly, do we continue to ask them to do so little?

In 1988, looking back at the five years that had passed since the report *A Nation At Risk* was issued, William Bennett remarked on the lack of progress:

*A Nation At Risk* also noted that it is not unusual for high school students in other industrialized countries to spend eight hours a day at school, 220 days each year. In the United States, by contrast, a typical school day lasts six hours, and the school year runs 175 to 180 days. *A Nation At Risk* recommended that school districts and state legislatures consider increasing instructional time by implementing a seven-hour school day and a 200- to 220-day school year, a recommendation that has been largely ignored.

American teachers prefer their current nine- or ten-month contracts, and their union leaders have opposed most legislative efforts to lengthen the school day or year. Since 1983, such proposals have been considered in 37 states. But a longer school year has been adopted in only nine of them—and all of those states merely extended their unusually short calendars to the more common 180-day standard. Only five states have lengthened the school day—none to more than six-and-a-half hours.

Bennett's finger-pointing should extend to the average citizen. As the Gallup numbers show, for years there has been weak public demand for more education, "more" meaning greater amounts of time spent in the schools helping children to learn. Once the public realizes the need for change and momentum builds, the school year and the school day will be lengthened, regardless of which other interests are opposed.

The 1989 Gallup poll hints at the beginning of a turnaround in public opinion—but only the beginning. Many parents would insist that their reservations are immediate and practical. They see summer as special, as a time for young people to be with their families, to do something that helps them grow—even if it is only attending summer camp—or to earn some money. Push these parents a little, and the objections become more emotional: kids need a chance to play, darn it, and they're under a lot of pressure as it is. What happened to the idyllic side of childhood? Is life to be all work? When will there be time for young people to explore the quirky and personal magic of their own creativity?

These questions are hard, and those of us who believe in the necessity of more schooling must not answer them glibly. But these questions are also rhetorical, and loaded. They rely for their effect on an idealized image of childhood which does not correspond to the down-to-earth, day-to-day summer experience of even middle-class kids. A school environment can be humane and true to the curiosity of children, and learning to read and write and compute and analyze is the key to unlocking the creative urge, not squelching it. For that matter, extended schooling can allow time not only for more instruction but also for more play. And surely summer is special for many families. But a school year that stretched into the last week of July would still leave more than a month for a family vacation, a stint at camp, or both. If Americans could tolerate going to school Saturday mornings, the break could start earlier.

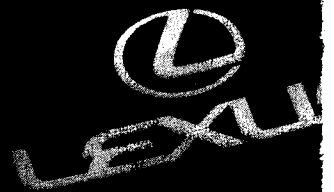
As it is, American kids have one of the longest summer vacations in the Western world. Like everything in life, this comes at a cost. For years educators have devoted considerable effort to documenting a





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phenomenon that many parents know from practical observation: the tendency of kids to forget during the summer what they learned in the spring. In 1978 a study of retention conducted for the New York Board of Regents reported, "Numerous research studies indicate that long extended summer vacations result in forgetting much that was learned during the regular school year. . . . In order to start a new year effectively, teachers in most elementary schools tend to devote four or more weeks [to] review and reteaching activities."

As for earning money, some students hold jobs because of genuine financial need, and others because their parents believe that doing so builds character. But many students work to maintain a level of conspicuous consumption that they and their families would do well to avoid. In any event, given the evolving world economy and the changing nature of employment, the financial stakes for all these students figure to be the same: to be strapped for today or to be strapped for life. Personal income correlates with education and one's position in what is fast becoming a global economy; we must expect the time to come when young people in Germany, Hungary, Japan, South Korea, and the United States will compete more or less directly to do the same work, with the jobs going to those who are best prepared to hold them. A nation intent on having its men and women able to afford a decent standard of living will insist that adolescent earnings be forgone today so that adult earnings are not lost tomorrow. The stakes are very high. The urgent priority of young Americans today is to learn.

Public resistance to more education rides on a surface of practical objection but draws its power from deeper sources: American mythology, defined as the country's collection of ideas about itself; American complacency; and, of late, American defensiveness. A subsidiary issue is the resistance of the American educational establishment, both the theorists at the university level and the ranks of unionized teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. Then comes the question of money: how to finance a change that must bring with it more pay for teachers, curriculum redesign, and capital improvements like air-conditioning.

A bit of educational history is in order. In many states school attendance was not mandatory for much, if not

most, of the nineteenth century. Many schools operated almost in the fashion of public libraries: that is to say, they were open for a great deal of the year but did not require local youths to be on the premises. Children would drop in and out as family responsibilities and personal inclinations dictated.

In 1847 Horace Mann, an educational reformer serving the state of Massachusetts as secretary of the Board of Education, in his annual report called for a mandatory minimum period of school attendance by students. Five years later the Massachusetts legislature enacted the nation's first compulsory-attendance law, requiring parents to send their children to school for at least twelve weeks.

Similar mandates were established throughout the country, but they could still be outdone by truancy; the United States was one place where submission to the regimentation of formal schooling was regarded with great ambivalence. Spending time in a classroom was not easy to reconcile with an affection for personal freedom and wide-open spaces, especially when the work involved abstruse subjects like math and grammar. Huckleberry Finn said it pretty well:

Well, three or four months run along, and it was well into the winter, now. I had been to school most all the time, and could spell, and read, and write just a little, and could say the multiplication table up to six times seven is thirty-five, and I don't reckon I could ever get any further than that if I was to live forever. I don't take no stock in mathematics, anyway.

At first I hated the school, but by and by I got so I could stand it. Whenever I got uncommon tired I played hookey, and the hiding I got next day done me good and cheered me up.

Call it Huck Finn's law: the authentic American flourishes in spite of schooling, not because of it. Of course, the demands of modern industrial life made inroads nevertheless. From 1890 to 1974 school enrollment among American fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds—the children around Huck Finn's age—grew from seven percent to 92 percent. In the same period the average length of the school year in the United States increased from 135 days to 179, and the average number of days of real attendance increased from 81 to 160.

The short and thoroughly modern life of the 180-day school year undercuts the theory that it survives from a







**A NEW YORK BOARD OF REGENTS STUDY REPORTED, "NUMEROUS RESEARCH STUDIES INDICATE THAT LONG EXTENDED SUMMER VACATIONS RESULT IN FORGETTING MUCH THAT WAS LEARNED DURING THE REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR. . . IN ORDER TO START A NEW YEAR EFFECTIVELY, TEACHERS IN MOST ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TEND TO DEVOTE FOUR OR MORE WEEKS [TO] REVIEW AND RETEACHING ACTIVITIES."**

time when the academic calendar followed the agricultural cycle. Not even this degree of intention can be discerned. Instead, the historical record gives evidence that the period of mandatory school attendance increased steadily over time as it was shaped by two broad influences: on the one hand, the always growing demand for an educated work force, and on the other, the instinct to spare children from formal schooling during the hottest months of the year, regardless of whether they had any role to play in farming. Even if the agricultural theory fit the facts, it would not explain very much. Other countries have agricultural pasts too, but this has not stunted the growth of their educational calendars.

It is true that the common public school spread rapidly in nineteenth-century America. The ideal product, however, was not the academic high achiever but the yeoman-citizen able to read and write well enough to be self-sufficient and to express his own opinion. Learning in and of itself was not thought to be the key to success; native ingenuity and self-directed hard work were. Richard Hofstadter, in his *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, outlined "the ideal assumptions" of the case against getting a lot of education.

Intellectuals, it may be held, are pretentious, conceited, effeminate, and snobbish; and very likely immoral, dangerous, and subversive. The plain sense of the common man, especially if tested by success in some demanding line of practical work, is an altogether adequate substitute for, if not actually much superior to, formal knowledge and expertise acquired in the schools.

Huck Finn's special dislike for mathematics is an American refrain picked up more recently by social-science research. Harold Stevenson, of the University of Michigan, has done pathbreaking work in comparing Japanese, Taiwanese, and American attitudes toward learning and education. In 1987 he observed,

Americans generally do not consider mathematics as important as reading in elementary school. According to our classroom observations, American teachers spend more class time on reading (language arts) than on mathematics at both first and fifth grades. Chinese and Japanese teachers, however, divide their time more evenly between these two subjects. . . . Despite the greater amount of time devoted to language arts in the U.S. as compared to the Asian countries, American mothers most frequently said that reading should be given more emphasis in elementary school. Japanese mothers were

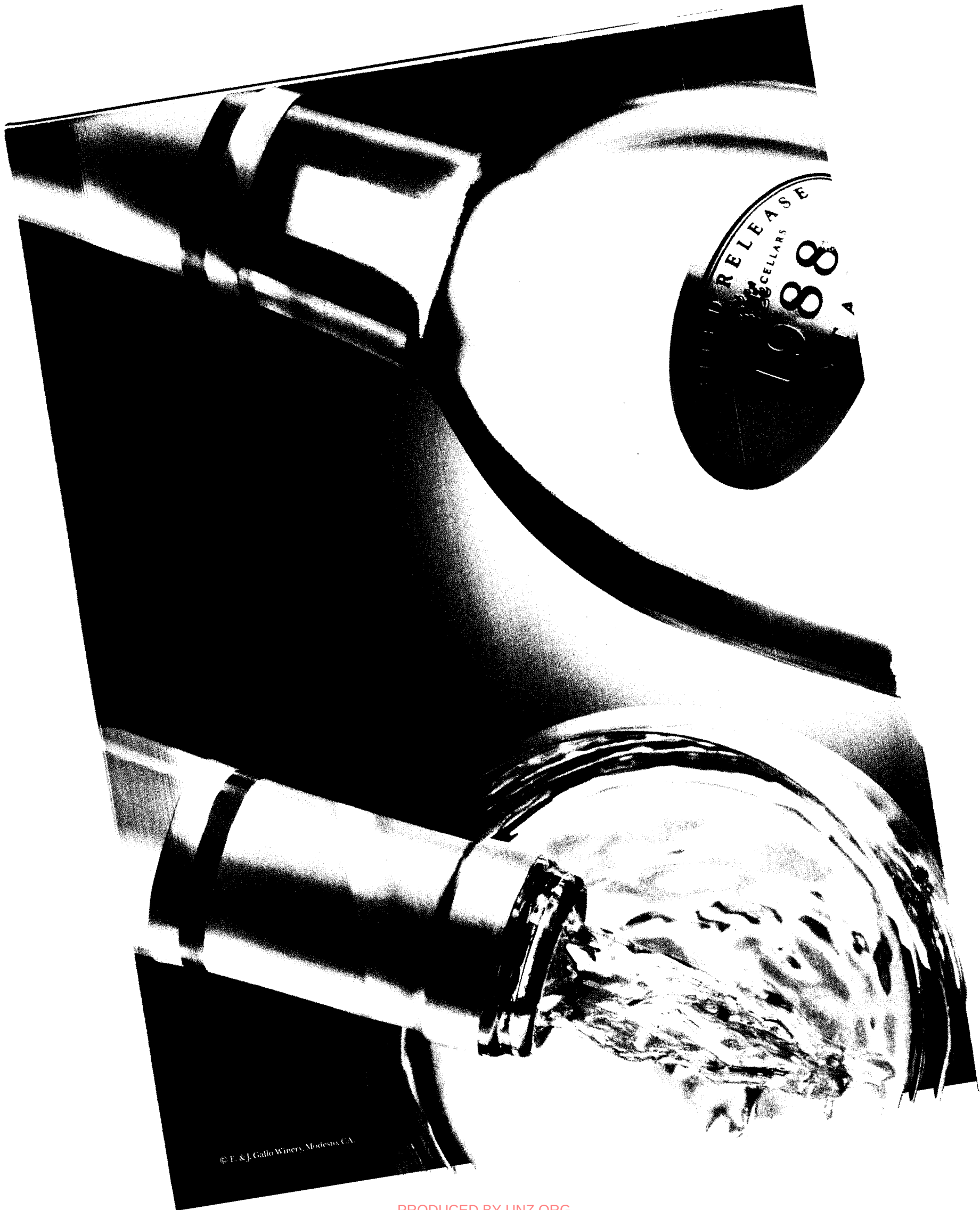
nearly three times as likely as American mothers to mention a need for greater emphasis on mathematics.

Even in the era of high tech, American mythology has adapted cleverly rather than given way. According to Hofstadter, the American scientist singled out for respect is the practical person who moves quickly to translate exotic research into something commercially marketable. Thomas Edison and the electric light, the Wright brothers and the airplane, Steven Jobs and the user-friendly computer—it is the figure of the American inventor-entrepreneur, not the American scientist-thinker, who nicely reconciles, in a technological age, our drive for achievement with our mistrust of the bookworm and the nerd.

The country's lukewarm feelings about academic high achievers, Hofstadter argued, arose out of our democratic and egalitarian traditions. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, this instinct to downplay intellectual effort had to confront two powerful new forces, the theories of Darwin and of Freud. Both lent authority to the idea that native predispositions, aptitudes, and innate traits—including intellect—were critically important. In truth, these theories seemed to say, people really are quite different from one another. Divisive as the message might have been, Americans found a way to reconcile it with egalitarianism. A belief in innate traits and personal aptitudes could be said, after all, merely to mimic the individualistic strain in American culture. People might be different, and some might be stronger intellectually than others, but who cared in a country where success could come through grit and hard work?

### Effort Versus Aptitude

A LINE OF REASONING THAT SOUGHT TO MINIMIZE the importance of intellect while accepting high-powered theories of intellectual differences was bound to break down as education and academic achievement came to mean more and more in the economy. In present-day American culture observers like Harold Stevenson and Merry White, a professor of sociology at Boston University, see a terrible inversion at work. Embracing the credo that every child is different, we make early efforts to pinpoint differences in ability and interests. Then we channel children into tracks according to what we think we have found. Thus a practice rooted in the American celebration of the individual operates to subvert the real-life chances of many American students.



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Stevenson, detecting an infatuation with ability grouping in his interviews with parents and students, wrote,

Compared to the Asians we interviewed, Americans placed more emphasis on differences in innate ability as the basis for variations in achievement. American children, for example, were much more likely than Chinese or Japanese children to agree with the statement, "The tests you take can show how much or how little natural ability you have." Conversely, American children were least likely to agree that "everybody in your class has the same amount of ability in math."

These beliefs are in line with those of their mothers. American mothers did not agree that people have the same amount of ability in mathematics. When asked about the role of effort, Chinese and Japanese mothers were more likely than American mothers to believe that any student can be good at mathematics if he or she works hard enough. American mothers also expressed stronger beliefs than Chinese and Japanese mothers that their children were born with their math abilities.

If aptitude rather than effort is seen as the key to achievement, the result will be to undermine the work ethic, at least as it applies to education. Time spent in a classroom will not seem very important.

As Stevenson indicates, among those who disagree with Americans on the relative importance of effort are none other than the Japanese. Their culture puts little stock in the notion of traits and aptitudes, placing paramount emphasis instead on what White calls "the path of pure endeavor." Here is a Japanese challenge more profound than economic competition. Granted, the Japanese have the advantage of a homogeneous population, but they still deserve credit for using the work ethic as a way around the politics of class. In stressing equal opportunity based on effort—and, for that matter, in being unapologetic boosters for effort itself—the Japanese threaten to embarrass us, by taking aspects of the American creed and applying them with more conviction than we do.

Today in American culture hard work is good if it is done for oneself or one's family, whether to meet one's own standards or to better oneself economically. We put great stock in individual striving and individual freedom. But hard work is not so good when it is done at the behest of others (except possibly in wartime). No one gets easy points in this country for toeing the line, taking orders, or going along with authority.

It follows that there is a deeply ambivalent reaction—part of human nature but exaggerated in the American character—to being told by elites to "work harder." The situation is exacerbated because so many of today's parents grew up in the 1960s, when anti-establishment values were at their zenith. Before the 1960s came the Eisenhower era, condemned for excessive conformity, for the oppressive sameness documented in William Whyte's *The Organization Man* and David Riesman's *The Lonely*

*Crowd*. In the Baby Boom generation's put-down of present-day Japanese values there is an echo of the same generation's put-down of the American 1950s.

## Failing Students, Contented Parents

AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY MAKES COMMON CAUSE with another formidable force: American complacency. Harold Stevenson's work in 1979–1980 with children, mothers, and teachers from three countries suggests the problem, by contrasting performance and attitudes. In one statistical exercise he rated the mathematics achievement of equal numbers of students from Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. Among the top 100 first-graders there were only fifteen American children. Almost unbelievably, among the top 100 fifth-graders there was only one American child. In contrast, among the bottom 100 first-graders fifty-eight were American, and among the bottom 100 fifth-graders sixty-seven were American.

There was more. The shocker came in the attitude surveys. More than 40 percent of the American mothers were "very satisfied" with how their children were doing in school, whereas less than five percent of the Japanese and Chinese mothers were "very satisfied." Nearly a third of the Chinese and Japanese mothers said they were "not satisfied" with their children's performance, but only 10 percent of the American mothers expressed dissatisfaction.

The jarring enthusiasm of the Americans persisted when it came to attitudes toward the quality of the schools themselves. Ninety-one percent judged that the school was doing an "excellent" or a "good" job. Only 42 percent of the Chinese mothers and 39 percent of the Japanese mothers were this positive.

Stevenson's paradox—low measures of student performance and high measures of parental satisfaction—prompted him to utter a despairing thought:

Given these findings, one wonders how practical it is to push now for educational reform in the United States. Schools can only respond to the needs expressed by the parents and citizens who provide their financial support. There is little indication in these data that large numbers of American parents find sufficient basis for dissatisfaction to alter their attitudes toward American education.

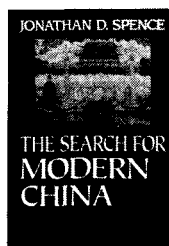
## Happy in Their Work

THE GOOD NEWS IN 1990 IS THAT AMERICAN complacency is giving way; these days everybody talks about the hardworking Asians and the buoyant Europeans. The bad news is that the newest emotions are American discouragement, defensiveness, and paranoia. Polling in 1989 showed nearly half the public in this country sub-

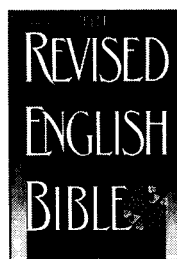
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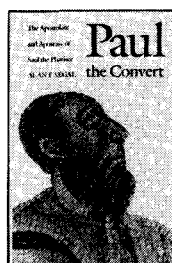
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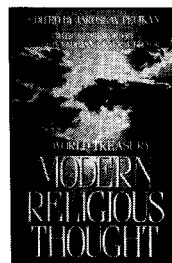
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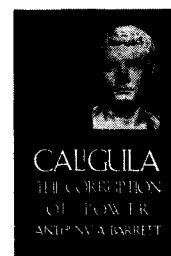
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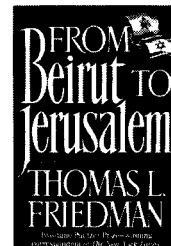
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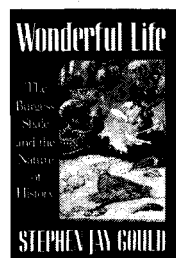
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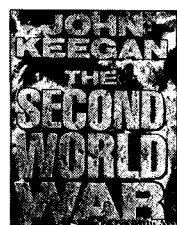
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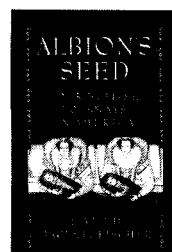
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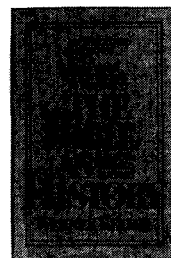
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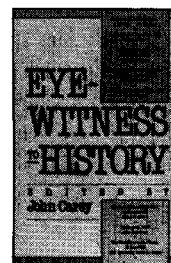
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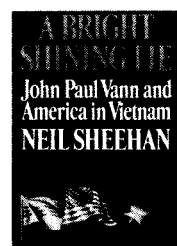
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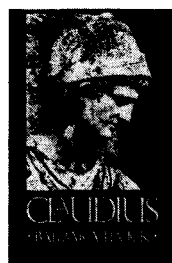
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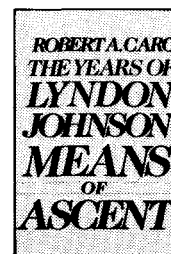
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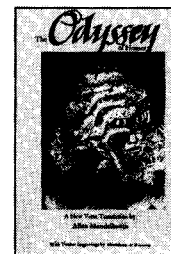
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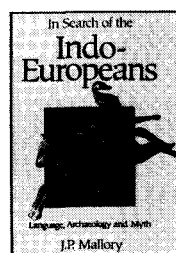
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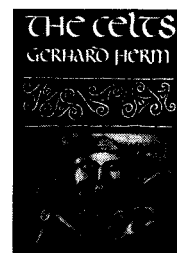
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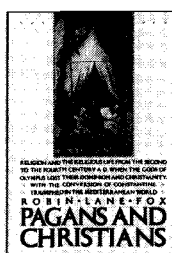
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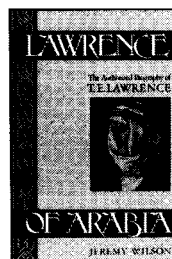
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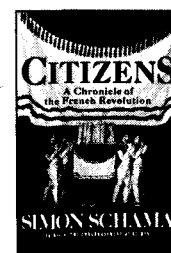
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**RATHER THAN ACKNOWLEDGING THAT AMERICANS PUT OUT LESS EFFORT THAN DO STUDENTS IN A MULTITUDE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, WE DEFINE THE ISSUE NARROWLY, AS A CHOICE BETWEEN OUR VALUES AND THOSE OF OUR STRONGEST COMPETITOR. HAVING SET UP THE STRAW MAN, WE BRIDLE AT THE THOUGHT OF "BECOMING JAPANESE."**

scribing to the notion that the United States is in "decline." But that doesn't mean we admire the competition. Rather than acknowledging that Americans put out less effort than do students in a multitude of other countries, we define the issue narrowly, as a choice between our values and those of our strongest competitor, Japan. Having set up the straw man, we then bridle at the thought of "becoming Japanese," shorthand for our fear of being dragooned into conformity and workaholicism, all in the name of meeting stiff economic competition.

Instead of examining Japanese culture, rejecting many of its features but accepting others in order to improve our own, we Americans focus on claims that the Japanese are imitators, not creators; that they pirate our technology; and that they cheat to gain advantage in international trade. These impressions are used time and time again to disparage proposals to extend the school year. All you

Old World practice, great borrowers from the different cultures that have shaped our immigrants. In 1810–1812 did not Francis Cabot Lowell, of Massachusetts, give himself a grand tour of textile plants in the British Isles, memorize the design of the great power looms in order to outwit English laws against technology transfer, and return home to establish the first modern factory in America? Robert Dalzell, Jr., a historian at Williams College, writes that Lowell's feat is viewed as a "stunning act of industrial piracy." We Americans take pride in our pragmatism, our flexibility; no fixed principle is more important to us than the principle that nothing is fixed. If there are things dogged and determined in Japanese attitudes that we admire, if there are features of their educational system that seem to work—even if there are few points to be gleaned about equal opportunity—we should be shamelessly American and adapt them for ourselves.

In any event, dwelling on the negative cannot carry us very far. Our understanding of the way the Japanese live is growing more sophisticated all the time, and some of the self-serving truisms of today are not likely

to hold up very well. One staple of conversation among American parents is the supposed association between the rigors of Japanese education and suicide among Japanese youths. The figures were once more troubling than they are today. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, in 1975 the suicide rates in Japan for the age groups ten to fourteen, fifteen to nineteen, and twenty to twenty-four were all higher than the U.S. rates.

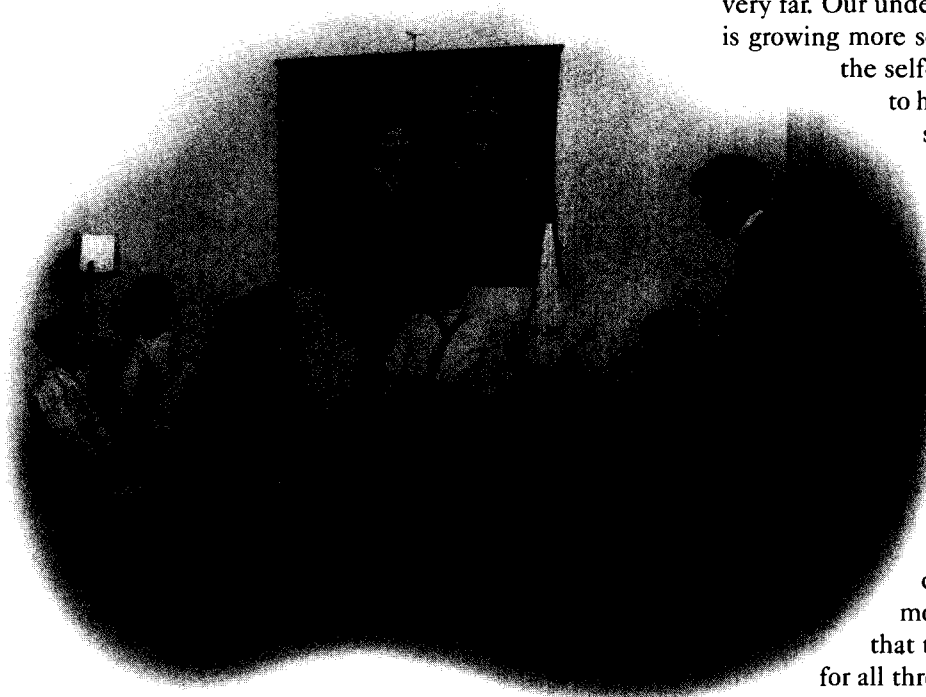
But by 1984 the Japanese numbers for the three age groups had gone down and the American numbers had more or less held steady, with the result that the American suicide rates were higher for all three age groups.

Japanese students do seem to be under considerable pressure to excel, but they do not seem especially unhappy, at least in the early elementary grades. Merry White, in her short and useful book *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children*, wrote,

Because of our preconceptions of Japanese schooling, a walk into a typical fifth grade classroom in Japan may shock us. We might easily expect an environment suf-

ever get by doing that, people argue, is a pocketful of misery, in terms of uncreative children and diminishing interest in classwork.

Such defensiveness misses the mark, and should be forsworn so that we might indulge instead an American habit. After all, we are energetic imitators of the good ideas of others, born appropriators of bits and pieces of





fused with rote learning and memorization, a structured and disciplined setting with an authoritarian teacher in control. This is far from the reality of most classrooms. Walking into a fifth grade math classroom, I was at first surprised: the mood was distinctly chaotic, with children calling out, moving spontaneously from their desks to huddled groups chatting and gesticulating. An American teacher would wonder "Who's in charge here?" and would be surprised to see the teacher at the side of the room, calmly checking papers or talking with some students. When I came to understand what all this meant, I realized that the noise and seeming chaos was in fact devoted to the work of the class; children were shouting out ideas for possible answers, suggesting methods, exclaiming excitedly over a solution, and *not*, as we might suppose, gossiping, teasing each other, or planning something for recess or after school. The teacher was not at all upset as long as total engagement in the appointed set of tasks persisted; she actually felt that the noise level was a measure of her success in inspiring the children to focus and work.

At its national convention last July the American Federation of Teachers criticized "treadmill schedules" that set out to cover the curriculum at all costs and do not provide teachers or students with adequate time for such things as reflection and planning. The proposed solution implied a reduction in teaching time. A far better one is suggested by the work of James Stigler and Ruth Baranes, observers of Japanese, Taiwanese, and American classrooms. Their research points to one of the contributions to quality made possible by a quantitative improvement in the school year: the pace at any given moment can allow for leisurely teaching and leisurely learning. Only teachers in Japan, they reported, were ever observed spending an entire forty-minute math lesson on one or two problems. In fact, their analysis revealed that the typical Japanese math lesson was less hectic than the American. "Japanese teachers," they wrote, "seem not to rush through material, but rather are constantly pausing to discuss and explain."

This is not to say that at the high school level the pace is relaxed. While the payoff for hard work is great in terms of student achievement, the side effects generate controversy and soul-searching among the Japanese public. Recently a fifteen-year-old girl died when she rushed to get into school just at starting time and a teacher, intent on locking out late students, slammed a heavy metal school gate on her head. The resulting uproar, which focused on the enforcement of rigid rules and discipline, suggests two general truths about education in present-day Japan: first, things are very far from perfect, and second, the system is not unyielding but subject to pressure and criticism—and presumably improvement as well.

American efforts to debunk the achievement orientation of the Japanese always seem to overreach. After all, Americans have taken considerable satisfaction in their own culture's work ethic. Any present-day rationalizations that, in effect, concede the willingness of the Japa-



nese to outwork Americans probably concede more than this society can afford. The current stage of anxious anticipation is still an early one. In not so many more years, if things do not change, the evidence of Asian and possibly European superiority, first in economic productivity and then in standard of living, will be overwhelming. The creed of American exceptionalism is powerful and volatile; it is an open question whether this society can exist successfully with the conviction that it is second-rate. If the price of avoiding psychological dislocation later is to adjust the culture now in order to make more room for academic achievement, the price would seem to be well worth paying.

James Fallows, the Washington editor of *The Atlantic*, argues that American defensiveness is wasted motion. Fallows contends that the world can become multi-polar, and can have many thriving economies. The United States need not be unilaterally dominant in order for American culture to work. Neither must we be slavish in our imitation of the Japanese. Presumably Americans will perform best in an environment that stresses openness and freedom, as opposed to the conformity bred by the Japanese system. In other words, we can, to echo the title of Fallows's recent book, succeed by becoming "more like us." But we do have to succeed. The bottom line for learning and working had better be the same: more or less equivalent effort leading to more or less equivalent results.

## Quality Versus Quantity

**G**ET PAST THE QUICKSAND OF AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY, American complacency, and American defensiveness, and the argument for extending the school year comes up against the educational establishment. One group of professionals has created a large and complicated body of literature, riven with statistical analysis, on the question of "time and learning." Two of the premises are unassailable. First, additional time by itself does not guarantee successful learning. More is not necessarily better, because other factors come into play, ranging from the quality of the teacher to the quality of the textbooks to the health of the student. Second, time is a commodity that comes in different sizes. The length of the school year, the length of the school week, the length of the school day, the number of minutes diverted to "classroom management" and lost to instruction, the number of minutes allocated to a particular subject, the amount of homework, the rate of pupil attendance and absenteeism—these blocks of time interrelate, and the importance of any one of them cannot be analyzed without considering its impact on the others.

Generally speaking, these theorists are not interested in the larger, garden-variety units of time such as the school year, the school week, or the school day. They prefer to deal with the smaller units, rearranged according to concepts of their own devising: "time on task," "engaged time," and "academic learning time." Nancy Karweit, of the Johns Hopkins University, does work that is representative of the group. In one article she presented a graph, based on her observation of twelve classrooms, to contrast what she termed "scheduled time," "instructional time," and "engaged time" in math class. Scheduled time was the number of minutes in a week that a teacher allotted for math instruction. Instructional time was the time left in scheduled time after classroom-management time and interruptions were deducted. Engaged time was the time left in instructional time after student inattention was deducted.

Karweit's aim was to take the official class period of forty-five or so minutes and, after close observation and careful counting, lop off all the minutes that were not used well. Her eye is on the micro-management of the educational experience. The focus is on using scheduled class time more effectively, shortening the transitions between tasks, minimizing distractions to learning, increasing the proportion of the class period in which the teacher is actively engaged with students, and increasing the quality and appropriateness of instruction. The length of the school year, in contrast, is what she calls a "global time measure." Whether to increase it is a question that might interest the generalist, but for her it is simply too big a clump of time to matter; too many other factors intervene to affect learning.

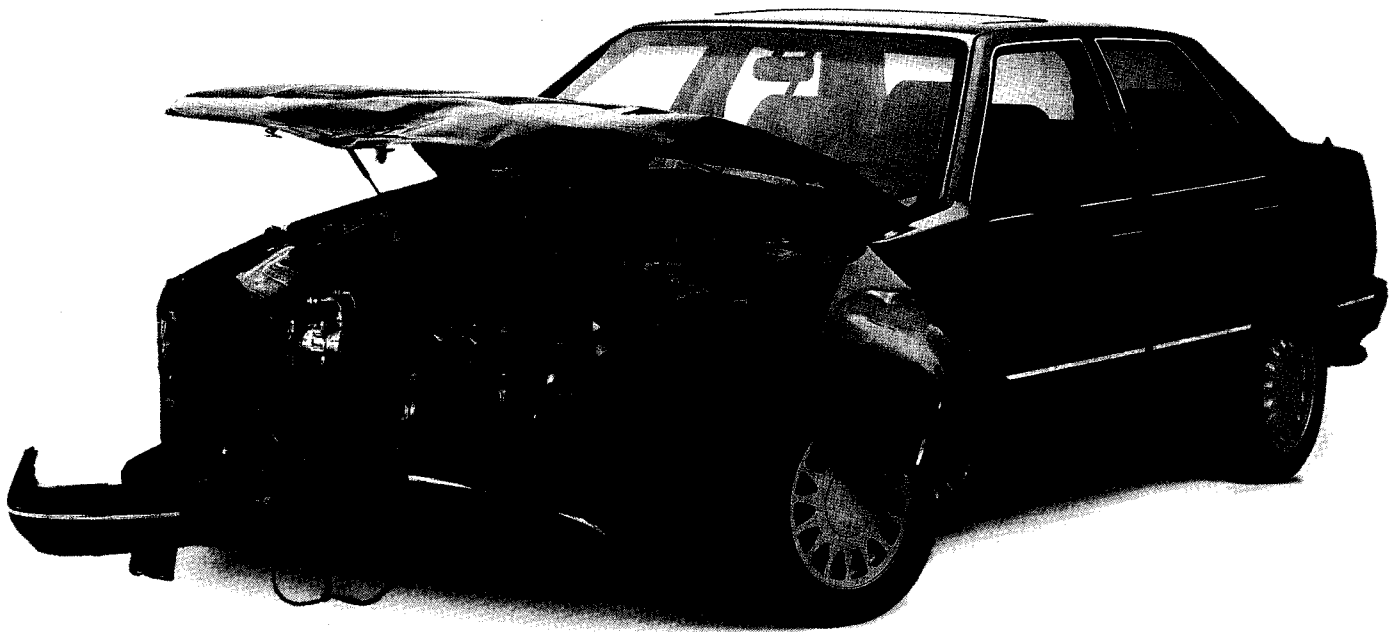
Time-and-learning theory finds a statistical relationship between the amount learned, as measured by achievement-test scores, and the time spent learning, but it is not a strong one. The reason is that so much else affects the student. Herbert Walberg, of the University of Illinois, has surveyed the literature to identify, in all, nine "educational productivity factors." Three have to do with personal characteristics: ability, chronological development, and motivation. Four have to do with psychological environments: home life, the classroom social group, the general peer culture, and television viewing. Only two have to do explicitly with instruction: the quality of teaching, ranging from the curriculum to the individual teacher's method, and, finally, the amount of time students are engaged in learning.

The Walberg list suggests that those who oppose a longer school year because they favor "quality" over "quantity" draw a misplaced contrast. Seven of Walberg's nine factors involve neither the quality nor the quantity of education but other considerations altogether. What is significant is that with the exception of lengthening the school year or school day, both of which can be done for thousands of students at a time, these productivity factors defy easy improvement by interested human beings. For masses of people across the entire society, personal qualities, psychological environments, and the quality of teaching will be slow to change.

The educational theorists concede as much; the prevailing mood in their ranks is either outright pessimism or a cautious allowance that things might improve at the margins. While they are quick to criticize proposals for change, they hesitate to put forward concrete alternatives of their own. For all the seeming precision gained by measuring learning in relation to engaged time rather than the raw number of days in the school year, these researchers are quite vague about how much to increase engaged time per day or per week. "How long can teachers be expected to productively interact with their students?" Karweit wonders. "How long can students be expected to be on-task?" Summarizing the current state of the literature for the Consortium on Educational Policy Studies at Indiana University, three researchers wrote, "Increased instructional time does have modest effects on student achievement; unfortunately, research is inconclusive on the most effective and practical ways to increase time."

There is a hidden irony, in any event, in the efforts of Karweit and others to boost "quality time" in the classroom. At first, those who speak of quality rather than quantity will always claim the higher moral ground. But the casual observer of American education comes away with the impression that past a certain point, gains in learning per hour will always be elusive—slipping and sliding in every school system with changes in teachers, administrators, teaching techniques, theories of learning, curriculum additions, and who knows what else. By its

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**UNDOUBTEDLY A HOST OF INFLUENCES, SOME OF THEM SUBTLE MATTERS OF CULTURE, ARE AT WORK WHEN AMERICAN KIDS DO POORLY AND OTHERS DO WELL. BUT WE ARE NOT LIKELY SOON TO BANISH THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE TOO NUMEROUS, NOR ARE WE LIKELY TO BANISH THOSE THAT ARE TOO SUBTLE. EQUALIZING THE TIME WE COMMIT TO LEARNING IS THE WAY THAT WE WILL BEGIN TO COME BACK.**

very nature, teaching is an extraordinarily decentralized human activity dependent on the personality of the teacher, the personalities of the students, and the chemistry among them. Trying to get the teacher and the students to bridge the gap between Japan and the United States by stepping up learning per hour—as the time-and-learning theorists do—is a great deal more daunting than creating a longer school year in which to cover more of the curriculum. Images come to mind of forced feeding and assembly-line speed-ups.

Unfortunately, these same theorists go out of their way to criticize proposals to extend the school year. Their major insight, as noted, is that playing with big variables like the school year won't help much if little things go wrong. For example, increasing the school year will do no good if all the additional time is lost to absenteeism. Points like these seem so self-evident as not to merit much repeating, but in the professional literature they appear all the time, slightly dressed up in academic verbiage.

In their current roles time-and-learning theorists are not much help; they stifle the political debate over education in this country. Every unit of learning time that they regard as important just happens to be a micro-measure too esoteric for convenient public discussion. Conversely, every unit of time that the public can talk about, think about, or do anything about is disparaged as a source of false hope. This is anti-democratic and elitist, and eventually self-defeating even for the social scientists. Educational improvements in a democracy need a mobilized constituency. Parents will not march to the town hall under the banner of increasing engaged time. They will not yet march under the banner of increasing the school year, either. But at least they can understand the idea without a course in statistics, and can take part in the debate—elementary, perhaps, but the first step toward change.

Nonetheless, the micro-theorists have something to contribute to the debate about how to improve education. Engaged time is a useful idea; nobody can argue with teacher-training efforts that focus on productivity within the classroom and the reduction of distractions and interruptions. For that matter, big and important debates about American education can continue within the context of a longer school year as well. Questions about curriculum, class size, teacher autonomy, school-based management, competency testing, dropout prevention, minority isolation, student services and counseling—

there is much to preoccupy us. A longer school year, while hardly sufficient in itself to reclaim quality in American education, is a superstructure under which other changes can be made. A school year of, say, 220 days will serve as a big tent. A number of things may go into the tent to make it a better place; to accommodate them all and to arrange them in proper order requires the space the tent provides.

The micro-theorists mount a highly technical assault on the longer school year. Many others within the educational establishment attack on grounds broader and more general, although not so closely reasoned. The arguments of these writers and thinkers vary but in the end boil down to the familiar preference for quality rather than quantity. In fact their stock in trade is not quality but complexity; they view the problem of American education as so knotty, with contributing factors so numerous and solutions so uncertain, that it can never be solved, only written about. These professionals seem incapable of coming up with a short list of concrete priorities for reform, let alone of describing how to get from the present to the future along the highly political road that reform must travel. Undoubtedly a host of influences, some of them subtle matters of culture, are at work when American kids do poorly and other kids do well. But we are not likely soon to banish the problems that are too numerous, and neither are we likely to banish those that are too subtle. Equalizing the time we commit to learning is the way that we will begin to come back. In lamenting that it is all very complicated, the professionals do nothing to advance the argument for dramatic change; in practical, political terms, they advance the argument for little change, or no change at all.

Lester Thurow, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has lost patience with all the foot-dragging. In 1985 he wrote,

The standard American response to proposals for a longer school year is to argue that Americans should learn to more efficiently use the current 180 days before they worry about adding more days. Such a response is to get the whole problem backwards. Instead of starting with what is easy to do—work longer and harder—Americans start with what is very difficult to do—work smarter. The argument is also a form of implicit American arrogance. Americans think that they can learn in 180 days what the rest of the world takes 220 to 240 days to learn. It also forgets that the rest of the world is trying to use its 220 or 240 days more efficiently.

# DEWAR'S PROFILE:

## KRISKRINGLE

in TIME's The New Elite.

Age: 40, single.

OCCUPATION: President and CEO, World Call Distribution Network.

HOBBY: "When you only work one day a year, you're not into sports."

FAVORITE BOOK: DEADLY DOGS OF LONDON, David Wilkie and others.

FAVORITE TV SHOW: THE TIME TUNNEL, "Deconstructing a lost, non-existing culture."

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "There'll be a lot of unhappy people I didn't."

PROBABLE LOCAL ANTIQUARIAN PHILANTHROPE: "Government is the only one who's around."

QUOTE: "My Christmas card is all I need."



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# Why establishing a insurance program is

## **THE NEXT ONE MAY NOT BE IN CALIFORNIA.**

Scientists warn that the probability of a cataclysmic earthquake striking the United States is becoming greater all the time.

They're not just talking about California, either. A major quake might well strike the East Coast and Midwest.

Such an earthquake, measuring, say, 8.0 on the Richter scale, could result in thousands of deaths. With property losses alone reaching \$70 billion.

## **THE ENTIRE COUNTRY WOULD SUFFER.**

Consider this.

Were a major earthquake to strike a city like Los Angeles, St. Louis or New York, the entire country would pay the price. And the impact would extend far beyond the deaths, personal injury and property damage in the immediate quake area.

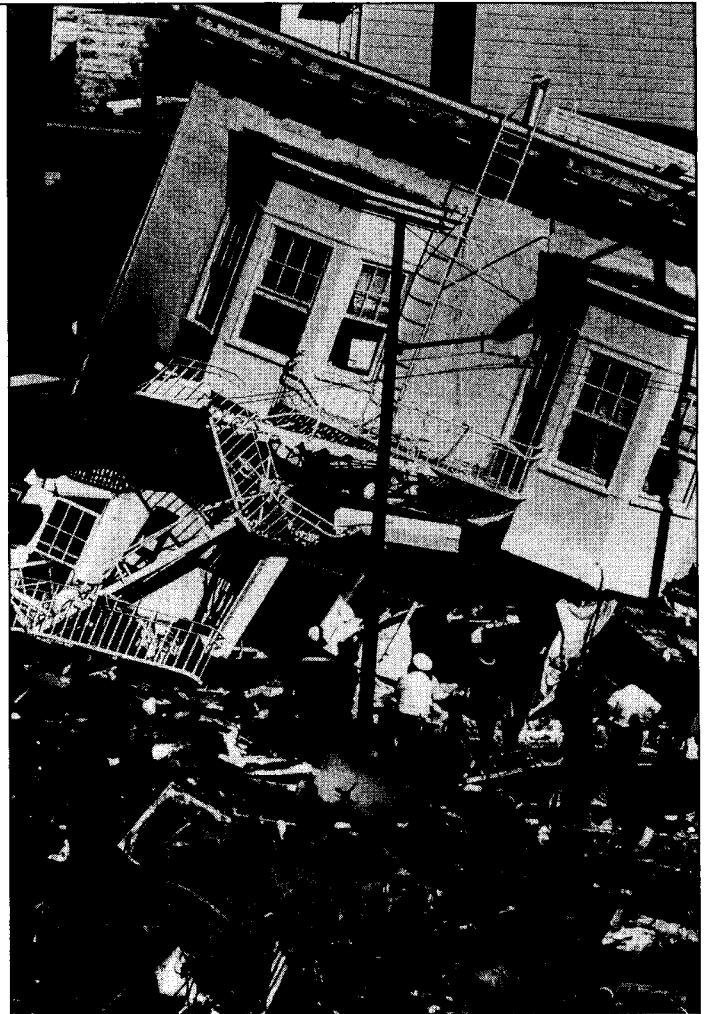
Start with disruption of critical energy and communication lines, food distribution and transportation. Add the problems in the financial markets that would inevitably arise as the insurance industry mobilized the funds to pay massive claims.

Worse yet, the insurance industry, drained of cash, might be unable to raise new capital to meet ongoing obligations and offer new coverages in the future.

As a nation, we can't afford to let this happen. Yet it easily could.

## **WE NEED TO BE BETTER PREPARED.**

Destructive earthquakes will continue to occur throughout the world. The only real uncertainties are when and where.



Minimizing their effects calls for some fresh thinking. That's where The Earthquake Project comes in.

The Earthquake Project is supported by companies that have been working individually and through trade groups for several years to lay the groundwork for legislation to address this problem. Our goal



# federal earthquake vital for all Americans.

is to protect the integrity of our economy in the event of a major quake.

And to make earthquake insurance available and affordable to every American homeowner and business.

## **A GOVERNMENT-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP APPROACH.**

The proposed legislation would create a federal earthquake insurance program based on a government-industry partnership. The program would increase the number of homeowners purchasing insurance, thereby spreading the cost of risk more broadly. As a result, rates would be generally lower than they are today and coverage would be more affordable.

Another feature of the program would be the creation of a federal earthquake reinsurance corporation. Commercial insurance companies could purchase additional reinsurance from this corporation to supplement their existing capacity. This extra layer of protection would come into play in the event insurance industry earthquake losses exceeded some predetermined large figure—say \$8 billion.

## **IT WOULD PROVIDE THE RESOURCES TO REBUILD OUR ECONOMY.**

With such a program in place, compensation could be available to every earthquake victim suffering property losses. Moreover, the reinsurance aspect of the plan would assist the insurance industry in performing its role of efficiently

allocating the resources needed for rapid recovery and for rebuilding our economy.

As we see it, a federal earthquake insurance program, undertaken with the participation of government, business and American homeowners, is no longer a matter of choice.

It's a necessity.

## **WHY IS AIG RUNNING ADS LIKE THIS?**

AIG (American International Group) is the nation's largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance, and the leading U.S.-based international insurance and financial services organization.

*The nature of our business means we deal every day with issues ranging from natural disasters to political risk. Not to mention other issues affecting the future of the world economy.*

*AIG is a founding member of, and participant in, The Earthquake Project. We believe the American public should understand the probable extent of devastation from a major earthquake. And the ways we as a nation can prepare to deal with it:*

*Let your elected officials know what you think of this proposal. Or if you'd like to express your views to AIG, write Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, AIG, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.*

**AIG** World leaders in insurance  
and financial services.

## The Matter of Leadership

**W**HAT, THEN, IS TO BE DONE? AS THE DEBATE over lengthening the school year is joined, how is public apprehension to be overcome, a public consensus to be formed?

First, there is the matter of leadership. Recall that in the late 1950s, after *Sputnik*, Americans did not balk at being challenged to run a race with the Soviets for world scientific supremacy. In fact, this nation has always reacted well to competitions summed up in muscular imagery by our leaders: Americans run races, go for the gold, vie for championships, all with admirable zest.

But these days the message of civic, political, and intellectual leaders is different. The tone is unrelentingly dour. Americans are not dared to run a race; they are told that the race has already been run, the United States has lost, and they are to blame—because they did not “work harder.” Both the political right and the political left have generated cottage industries centered on the person of the scold, the critic, the moralist. These entrepreneurs of gloom engender a very mixed reaction, because people are ambivalent about being lectured to. When Roger Porter, a presidential aide for economic and domestic policy, labels American education “depressing and uninspiring,” dismay at our prospects dampens our appetite for meeting the challenge. The end-of-the-American-century, fall-of-a-great-power talk has gone too far.

Where education is concerned, the Gallup polls tell us that people are now open to a message of change. Complacency is no longer holding us back. But the tone of the message must be optimistic, and resonant with the American themes that lend themselves to the task of mobilizing for change—specifically, the notions that we have always risen to the challenge of competition, felt free to adapt the good ideas of others, worked like demons when the prize was self-improvement, and had a special knack for exploiting the practical fruits of learning.

Americans are up to the game of international educational competition, but we need to know what the rules are. When the rest of the world plays a twenty-minute

period, American students cannot be expected to rack up as many points in fifteen. Our toughest competitors are, in fact, playing a school year of 220 days or so, with results that bode poorly for America's future. It is up to this country's leaders to get the word out, in a way that inspires rather than dispirits their audiences.

Once these leaders make the effort, they will find that many people are way ahead of them, and not only because of concern about international competition. An entirely different dynamic is also at work, one that promises to tip popular opinion further in favor of more schooling. Aspects of it were detected by the 1988 Gallup poll on education, in response to the question “Would you favor or oppose the local public schools' offering before-school and after-school programs where needed for so-called latch-key children, that is, those whose parents do not return home until late in the day?”

To those familiar with public resistance to extending the school year and school day, the response was stunning. Seventy percent of the sample were in favor, 23 percent opposed—a spread repeated when Gallup asked the question, in slightly different form, last year.

The forces at work here are formidable. More than 25 million women in the United States have children under the age of thirteen, and most of those women work at least part-time. Latchkey children, who spend some part of the working day at home without adult supervision, arouse particular concern. A 1987 Harris survey indicates that 12 percent of elementary, 30 percent of middle school, and 38 percent of high school students are left to care for themselves after school “almost every day.”

In the seventh-grade class I taught for a day, the majority of the students lived in housing projects. They were not averse to the idea of a longer school year. Instead, they volunteered that kids would be kept off the streets, that now they were “spoiled” by too much TV and too much Nintendo, and that there was nothing to do over the long summer vacation. The students also had suggestions about what a longer school year might include: more sports, more time to study, and more opportunity to take courses in subjects that interested them.





**FOR YEARS THERE HAS BEEN WEAK PUBLIC DEMAND FOR MORE EDUCATION, "MORE" MEANING GREATER AMOUNTS OF TIME SPENT IN THE SCHOOLS HELPING CHILDREN TO LEARN. ONCE THE PUBLIC REALIZES THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND MOMENTUM BUILDS, THE SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE LENGTHENED, REGARDLESS OF WHICH OTHER INTERESTS ARE OPPOSED.**

The issue here extends beyond latchkey children to touch all manner of middle-class, working-class, and poor families. Many parents who cover all the bases for their children are doing so just barely, and at a cost in terms of missed wages that they cannot sustain forever. All told, an enormous potential constituency exists for a longer school day, folded into a longer school year.

### The Vision of Justice Brandeis

**T**HE COMPLAINT WILL BE HEARD THAT A SCHOOL cannot be all things to all people—cannot be place of education, health-care clinic, settlement house, and neighborhood recreation center rolled into one. The pragmatic response is that a school must in fact be all these things.

In most communities the best facility for accommodating large numbers of children is the school building. The best adults to be with these children are teachers, and the best way to structure the hours involved is through a curriculum that permits ample time for physical exercise, creative activity, and play, as well as learning. Almost nothing else—neither healthy civic institutions nor trained personnel—is available to the children, either at the end of the abbreviated school day or at the end of the abbreviated school year.

Despite the size of the potential popular constituency, a big problem remains. Teachers tend to be opposed to an extension of the school day and school year. Most prefer their summer vacations. But significant increases in pay are also very important to this financially pressed group. Teachers must recognize that the school-year and school-day issues are the levers they have been looking for; better pay and big extensions of school time go hand in hand.

Which leads to the subject of how, in this complicated country, the transition to a world-class school year can be made, and how members of the public, many of them not parents, can be induced to pay the costs.

Matters already discussed are crucial. Leaders must

emerge among parents, educators, civic activists, and politicians. The issue must be thrust into the public domain, the international data disseminated, the economic stakes made clear. Bills must be introduced at the state level (I am sponsoring one in Massachusetts) to increase the minimum length of the school year. As obvious as this step is, it raises a question of fairness that dogs reform in the American system.

In the 1830s and 1840s Horace Mann struggled to rescue the floundering American school system and persuade a divided public of the need to educate children more thoroughly. As secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann firmly staked out a position against maximum local control of the schools—an undertaking as controversial then as it is now. He undercut hiring prerogatives by proposing statewide standards for teachers, and infringed on curriculum-setting power by



pushing for uniformity in textbooks. His influence soon extended across the country. Various state legislatures stepped up the pace of educational reform, passing laws whose effects were to increase drastically the number of children in school, the length of time they spent there, and the cost and quality of the instruction they received.

Here came a dose of messy politics: These same legis-



latures declined to assume the cost of funding these good acts. Instead, the new laws took the form of state-imposed mandates on municipalities, to be paid for out of property taxes. Legislatures had the right to do this because then, as now, state constitutions placed local communities under the power of state governments.

Mandates made people upset. One hundred and fifty years later they still do. When the state dictates to the city and town, critics object either that the content of the mandate is bad or that the content is fine but the dictator should foot the bill. The mandating power, these critics say, makes accountability impossible, places a financial burden on the lower governments, and offends the unwritten but powerful tradition of home rule.

True enough, but mandates have an overriding virtue: awkward in principle, they work in practice. Systems of government must somehow sort out responsibilities. In the American system the sorting out gets done by the U.S. Constitution and the constitutions of the various states, as interpreted by the courts, and by the U.S. Congress and the state legislatures. From the start, the public schools have been left to local communities to run—but the ground rules have been written elsewhere, and they have changed as the country and world have changed.

Those who insist that states fully fund their education mandates would lead us into the political bog, and soon be stuck themselves. Legislatures and Congress might respond by declining to set higher standards, which would be disastrous. More likely, these bodies would set the standards, assume the costs—and then extend their influence even further, into day-to-day policy-making, which should be left to local people. Full funding would have the effect, ironic for the locals who demanded it, of leading inexorably to more state encroachment and oversight. It is an axiom of political finance, and probably of human nature: If you pay for it, you will want to run it. It follows that if a healthy measure of control over schools is to remain at home, local officials must live with mandates, and without insisting on full funding.

One is able, then, to lay one's hands on a blunt but historically effective tool of change: the mandate. One can envision the pattern of change, true to federalism and the maxim of Louis Brandeis: a leapfrog trail from one state to the next, as each works out the problems of persuasion, politics, and finance. One can describe several elements of change. A longer school year should be phased in over some period, because time will be needed to plan, and because local governments cannot tax their citizens into penury, even when mandated to do so. Stepped-up revenue-sharing should come from state legislatures, because while full funding of the mandate is

neither possible nor desirable, a generous partnership is.

And one must insist upon some help from the federal government. The Chief Executive of the United States must be asked to be the education President he says he wants to be, and to sponsor and sign into law a program of federal aid to school districts as they switch to a longer year. The federal government's tax base is broad enough to help finance the expansion of the school year. Nothing is more critical to national security in the post-Cold War era than schooling our children, yet education's share of the federal budget in fiscal year 1990 was an abysmal 1.9 percent. The issue here is priorities, not capabilities. The question, as the old saw goes, is not whether we can afford to do it but whether we can afford not to.

While a broad-based movement builds, more immediate levers of change present themselves. If civic or political leaders are determined to see a 220-day school year in their state by the year 2000, they might begin by raising private-sector and public-sector matching funds to extend the year for ten or so medium-sized districts, spread among the poor, the middle-class, and the well-to-do. And if this arrangement does not work, a handful of affluent districts can take the plunge on their own, using their taxing power and their long-standing prerogative to go beyond state minimums in setting the local school year. This would be financially feasible in the short term and politically formidable in the long term. In my own state of Massachusetts, what Lexington does today, Concord will feel impelled to do in relatively short order.

Some will hesitate, in the well-intentioned belief that the school year should not change for any district until it changes for all. But, as a matter of tactics, this is not shrewd. The issue is not whether all schools change to 220 days; the issue is whether no schools whatsoever change, depriving us of the chance to get the process started. Once the trend begins in earnest, the courts or the legislatures will come under mounting pressure to do the right thing by poorer communities. In the past two years the supreme courts of New Jersey, Kentucky, Texas, and Montana have handed down landmark decisions on inequities in the financing of rich and poor school districts. If the aim is social justice, it becomes important to set a longer school year as the standard of record, even for a handful of wealthier districts, so that poorer districts can then be brought up to par.

Find a way to begin the process, and watch it build on itself. Who will abide having his children receive forty fewer days of education every year than the kids in the next town over? For that matter, who will abide, for much longer, having her children receive less education than the kids in the country the next continent over? The world is shrinking. Change is inevitable. It is only a matter of time. □

*The historical prints and photographs of American schools and schoolchildren which appear throughout this article were obtained from the following collections: Culver Pictures, Inc. (pages 80, 81, 90, 97, 104, and 105); The Bettmann Archive (page 87); and The Granger Collection, New York (page 96).*



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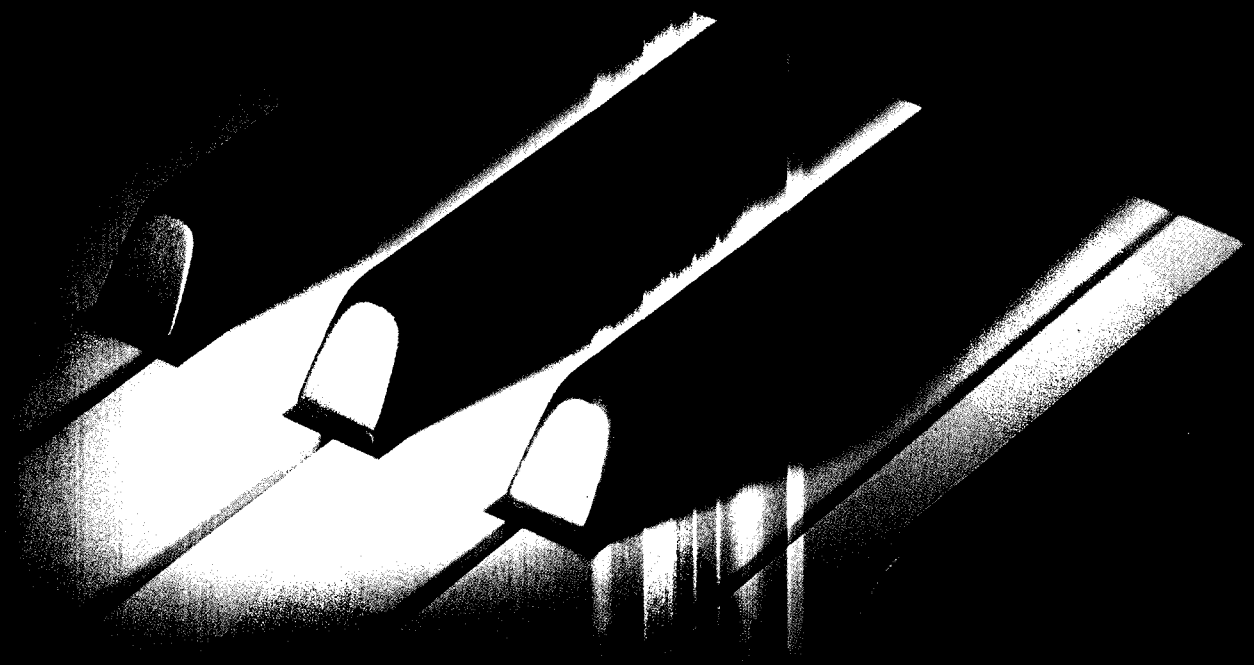
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A Short Story

## A Daughter's House

by Sharon Sheehee Stark

THE BUS WAS A DUTCH-COUNTRY PRODUCT. Plump, dumpling-colored, clean even under the armrests, it seemed piteously beset in the murk of the tunnel. Linda had felt sorry for it, despite the untoward delay in Jersey. And now she felt sorry for herself, disembarking into a fume-filled Manhattan garage, disembarking stiff-legged and headachy—and nobody there to meet her. Damn it, she thought, you promised.

*At twenty-one she had wanted  
what her daughter now had—the nobility  
of art and the charm of poverty*

She carried her luggage into the Port Authority building. Inside Bud's two-suiter was borne the harvest of her new fecundity. The art scarves, despite their abundance, weighed practically nothing. The heft was in the tuxedo skirt suit, in the three pairs of black shoes she had brought because she couldn't decide in advance. Two backup costumes in case. The pouch of good junk jewelry. All told, though, hers was a burden worth bending under, so vividly did she imagine who she

would be tonight—the suit, the subtle glitz, the precise balance of modesty and panache she would strike in refusing to divulge the secret behind the vibrant scarves she'd created as neckware but hoped now to sell at steep prices, for framing and hanging on the wall. The mote in her gemstone was Jen. Where the devil was she?

In the not so remote past, facing the slightest hitch, she might have turned back. Those were years when her daughter was still at home, and Linda, timid, was lost outside the relentless cycles of housekeeping and child care. But middle age proved to be the room where she found her finer self waiting. She came together almost chemically; she suffered the good pain, the white heat. Industry and quick success tightened her grip, gave her what the *Times* called "starch." And *savoir faire* (fancy that!). Well, she'd find a phone, of course. The woman from the gallery had offered her apartment. Beyond that—well, she could certainly afford a decent hotel.

That settled, she put down her suitcase and turned a cool eye on a man shuffling into a boarding queue for buses to Wilmington and Philadelphia. He was cackling to himself and dragging a stack of magazines by a long strap.

As Linda puzzled on this, suddenly, from nowhere, an arm brushed past her pocket and a dusky hand closed decisively over the grip of her suitcase. With an affronted cry she grabbed her belongings.

"Good God, Ma. P.I. is only trying to help you."

Linda waited until Jen came around, stepping into view with a crisp snapping back of shoulders and jaw. She was wearing a pre-war caracul coat thrown open over something greenly sequined, whose stringy hem came just to the tops of a set of silver cowboy boots. Over her shoulder she carried a camera case and purse. In her hand was a waxed bakery bag. Linda stared at Jen's mouth—the laugh that just sat there like a fancy cat on a scarlet cushion. "Pig Iron Clincy. My mother, Mrs. Schnitz."

"Jennifer!"

"Just joshin' ya, Ma. Mrs. Lebzelter," she amended.

"Hello." Linda acknowledged the black man without relinquishing her gear. She turned quickly back to Jen, scrutinizing the depth and dark of the crescents under her eyes. "You're thin," she said, out of maternal concern but also to cover her doubts about Pig Iron, a mesomorph with a head shaved ski-run style above a dazzling eminence of fat gold chains. Though it was early March, he wore no coat, only a thick sweatshirt that said PIG IRON in a rage of high, fiery print.

Jen threw her arms around Linda and kissed her, whispering, "Be good." And when Linda, with a Pavlovian lurch, enlisted both arms to respond, her bag was automatically commended to Pig Iron, who swept it up as Jen, taking her mother's hand, said, "Let's make tracks, kid."

"Where we going?"

"To the Number One."

"The subway? Don't be silly. We'll take a cab."

"It's a ten-buck fare. Besides, the train is faster."

The line at the Wilmington gate was gone, but the man with the magazines, Linda saw, had not boarded. He stood watching her from just inside the gate, his gaze unsettlingly intimate, as if they shared some sad understanding about how a person's travel plans might prove as fanciful as his baggage.

"Stop gawking," Jen said.

In the subway car they sat three abreast, Linda squeezed shoulderless in the middle. "Well, it's wunnnnderful to see you!" Jen cooed.

Linda smiled, uneasily, not yet inured to that lilt, the trombonal syllabic slide in Jen's delivery.

"Just to keep the record straight," Jen said, rattling the bakery bag, "we were there at exactly three-ten. Your bus was late, you know, so we went upstairs to Zaro's."

The small acknowledgment mollified, lightened Linda. "You wouldn't believe what happened on the bus," she said, too brightly.

Jen leaned across Linda's lap to address Pig Iron. "The infamous Gauglerville bus. Chug chug."

And feeling like an extra wheel, screaming above the gnash of wheels beneath, Linda went on to tell them about the woman who had made the mistake of lighting up in the john. How the bus driver had dipped his right shoulder, audibly sniffing the air just before he jerked his wheel and lurched off the road. The smoker emerged to find him hopping mad in the aisle, thrashing the frail exhalation with a clean hanky. "Poor thing," Linda said. "She kept trying to tell him she'd only taken 'one little drag to tide her over.' And that just made him crazier."

"Put that thing away," Jen said, tucking Linda's index finger into her fist. Linda had broken the finger trying to cushion a fall the icy winter she was pregnant with Jen. The accident had altered its personality, and now when Linda was nervous or excited, it popped like a switchblade, and she carried it around like one.

"So, anyhow," she went on, "he was one of those quacking Dutchmen. He kept saying 'scufflaw.' He won't have no 'scufflaws' smelling up his coach. And 'gotferdum,' he was leaving and not coming back until the smoke cleared."

Jen was delighted. "And did he—get off the bus?"

"As fast as those little legs could carry him. He took a footstool from the cargo hold and"—Linda drew a breath, conscious now of how hard she was working to forge a bond by mocking the very stuff they'd come from—"plunked it down on the berm. And there he sat, arms crossed, stump-stubborn, for a full fifteen minutes."

"She-it," Pig Iron said.

"Bet it was you," Jen said, pinching Linda's cheek.

"What was?"

"That—uh, scufflaw."

"Not me. I quit smoking."

"Since when?"

"Since I've been . . . uh, happy."



Across the way sat a shiny young executive in a camel's-hair coat cut much like Linda's own. In the glass behind him her daughter shifted, stiffened. Her pretty face, seen like that, seemed featureless. How quickly the city claimed the young. "You don't travel this way at night?"

"No," Jen said, in that abstracted tone she used when she wanted her mother to know she was lying.

Having plunged, Linda pressed on. "That awful Philco refrigerator—did you get someone in to look at it?"

"Not exactly."

"But I sent you money to fix it."

"Your kid needed shoes,"

Jen said, pistoning her sturdy legs into the aisle.

"Uh-oh," Pig Iron said.

The silver boots, the very sass of them, stopped Linda: she would not be drawn into recriminations. Today she was just a woman wending toward the time of her life. "Nice," she said. "May they carry you far."

The businessman disembarked. His seat was immediately claimed by a black woman with a babe in arms. The woman was not obese but broad, sumptuously so. Her shoulders swayed with the train, the capacious cradle of lap and arms rocked jauntily, her high, rounded cheeks shone red-gold. The infant stared at her with rapturous black eyes. Linda could not keep from looking. And when Jen jumped up, shouting, pointing, Linda imagined for a moment that she, too, was reacting to the extraordinary light around mother and child.

They seemed to be traveling backward. Stomach tumbling, Linda braced herself. "The Burner!" Jen cried. "Quick, look. Jesus. Wow." Then Linda saw it—the Number Two as it highballed by. She'd seen her share of graffiti, but this was something else, each car lacquered in metallic turquoise, purple, pink, and green. The speed of the train blurred the graphics, turned them to sheer nerve. "Way to go!" cried the girl who once led cheers for the high school soccer team.

At the end of their car a row of teenage girls rose and applauded, a hundred bracelets shaking. The mother buried her face in nubby bunting; the baby shrieked with joy. Pig Iron sprang to his feet and bowed deeply up and down the aisle. A matron in tweeds tried not to smile.

When they were moving through darkness again, Jen sat back, breathless and glowing. "That, madam," she said, "was P.I.'s pride. The jewel of his collection."

"What?"

"He prosecutes *his* art at great personal risk, late at night, police dogs nipping at his heels. Pig Iron, incidentally, was done last week in the *Voice*."

"Whoa, girl," Pig Iron said, his face dangling masklike above them. He was hanging on the strap with both hands. "That's chicken dribble. This lady made the *Times*." Linda grabbed the corner of her abandoned suitcase to keep it from running away on its little wheels.

"And a show"—he pinched his nostrils—"at an uptown gallery. That's real bad, man."

"He means real good," Jen said, drily.

When Pig Iron went on to marvel that she'd done it at all, "a zillion miles from the red-hot center, stuck in the sticks, man," she replied with a condensed version of the stilted little lecture she'd prepared for tonight. How she'd set aside her deepest yearnings through the nurturing years. When Jen left home, how she had missed her, but . . . The part about perseverance, the part about ardor. The obligatory footnote about luck. The chance event that instantly transformed her cottage industry into what the *Times* had termed "medium-high art."

"I wouldn't call what she does *art*, exactly," Jen said, gripping her entry-level Nikon firmly. "More a craft. A highly skilled craft."

"What you talk, girl? You kick-ass proud of yo mama."

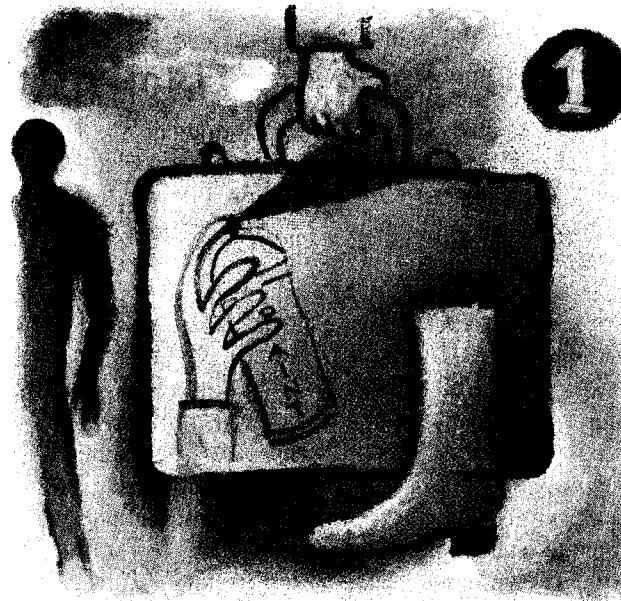
"Ignore him. What's he know, home boy like him."

Pig Iron swooped his mouth to Linda's ear. "She pea-green jealous, that's all."

"Shut up," Jen said. "Or I'll tell her about the teapot." Linda looked at her.

"Gram's good teapot. You gave it to me, remember? In mint condition?"

When Jen was scavenging housewares, extracting a motley boxful from Linda's half a lifetime's worth—mugs and saucepans, mismatched sheets and silverplate—she'd searched the cupboards for a second- or third-string teapot. Which tickled Linda. For through all the years when Jen was toughening into the force she was, she'd retained something of the spinster primness she'd shown as a timid, needy child. The entire time she was back and forth to community college, she'd not gone a single day without her short stack of Lorna Doones and her cup of spearmint tea. Linda had debated and then at the very last moment presented Jen with her best vessel, the nineteenth-century pink lustre come down from her great-great-grandmother.





"Don't shoot!" Reaching for the sky, Pig Iron reeled clownishly off balance. "Check it out, man. Just a mini nick on the—"

"Spout?"

"Rye-ite," he said. "The spout."

"Franklin Street!" Jen shouted, as if she were the conductor of not just the train but the entire town. She swept Linda and Pig Iron before her, onto the platform. "Watch it, Mac," she said to a cutthroat type in a plumed hat who'd jostled her in passing.

Pig Iron grinned. "Girl, you out—New York the New Yorkers. Day I find the dude that decked you, I want to slap him five, twice."

Linda stopped dead. "What the hell's he talking about?" she said, trying to keep Pig Iron, who'd sprinted ahead, in open sight. Pitching her grip over the turnstile, he danced through the cog sideways, recovered the goods, and vanished up the steps.

"It's no big deal," Jen was saying. "Some twerp wanted to sell me some dope. I told him to bug off and he cold-cocked me on the spot."

"My God."

"Don't worry. The doctor said it was only a mild concussion—can't you move a little faster?"

Up on the street Pig Iron was waiting in a chill drizzle. Linda had left Pennsylvania under a sky as smooth and blue as her made bed.

"Okay, Linda," Jen said, "which way do we go?"

"Don't you know where you live?"

"Let's pretend I don't and you have to show me."

Linda stared down at her pretty suede pumps. She'd bought city shoes with lowish heels for walking.

"Hint: I live on the West Side."

Linda gave her a blank look.

"Hint number two: Find the Empire State Building."

Spotting it easily in the uptown jumble, Linda pointed like a child.

"Very good. Now, if that's north, then we must be south, no?"

Extending both arms, Jen rotated like a compass. "A quick and simple calculation tells us"—she wiggled her fingers—"east is there. And I live west, so which way you taking us, ma'am?"

"Oooooo," Pig Iron said. "You mean to yo mama."

"Am not. She has to learn how to get around."

Linda squared her shoulders and strode off across the street in the prescribed direction.

Pig Iron was shaping up as an ally. When he fell in beside her, she tilted at him, whispering. "We should have taken a cab. Can't be much fun for you, lugging that big thing."

"Hey, no prob."

From several steps ahead Jen swiveled back. "Pig Iron comes from a long line of beast of burdens."

Linda drew a deep breath. "That's 'beasts of burden,'" she snipped. "Like 'mothers-in-law.'"

ON THEY TREKKED FOR BLOCKS AND BLOCKS, Jen acting as tour guide. The shoes, Linda decided, were wrong after all. She needed something springy, like Pig Iron's hightops. Still, she would endure, even prevail, as long as her hair held up. But now, thinking that, reaching up, she discovered that the damp had reinstated that ugly top wave that made her look squat, stupid, and off-balance. And when Jen spun suddenly around, crouching down with her camera, Linda clamped a hand over her crown, her mouth shut, and refused to say "cheese" or anything else that might accrue to the advantage of the little tyrant.

On Canal Street something was letting out. A swarm of men in tasseled convention hats enveloped Jen. Alone with Pig Iron, Linda panicked for a second before spotting her again, with an umbrella vendor, one of dozens coming out now all along the street. Drawing close, Linda saw that she was negotiating to buy her mom an umbrella. Ah! Her offer was firm, her expression strict.

"For heaven's sake, Jen, let me," Linda said, whisking aside the girl's pitiful five-spot with a fistful of bills. To the impassive vendor she said, "Take what you need for three."

"Not for me," Jen protested.

"Man, I'm covered," Pig Iron said, rocketing Linda's suitcase atop his head.

She suspected Jen of taking her way off course. Surely nothing in Manhattan could survive this far from the subway line. They walked single-file, Pig Iron sherpa-like in the middle, Linda hunched under the flimsy umbrella, trying to remember how far she had come in this world.

I'll take a nap. I'll eat and sleep and revive, she thought. They were on West Broadway—now she recognized the cement island, the shop with the ugly Brazil-made shoes. Bud had been driving the day they'd delivered Jen to the city. When she was settled, they'd gone out to case the neighborhood. Bud hated the city doors, with their untold layers of blobby paint. The cheap pink shoes in the window put a sickish tinge on Linda's soul. And when they left that night, Bud, who had a Jeep dealership, said, "My word, wife, we just installed our only child in a parts warehouse."

But now the loft loomed like the upper deck of heaven itself, and her heart leaped when she saw the street sign. Duane Street. Yes, there, up ahead, the dun-colored row of butter-and-egg wholesalers. And there, the shuttered deco restaurant where Bud had humiliated Jen by informing the maitre d' that if it was raw they wanted, he would have taken his family to eat at a produce stand.

And now, as they passed Ragtime, the vintage dress shop, she became aware of a sudden pulsant stillness, as if they'd come to the end of something. The quiet enlivened Linda, and she hurried to keep up with the young people.

"Well, hallelujah," Jen said, as they regrouped at her

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doorstep. Deftly she dipped into a purse that Linda now recognized as one she'd recently spent hours looking for. And those hands. Jen had always chewed them hard, and only weeks ago, Linda recalled, they had been a child's hands, pudgy and always picking at something. Now any residue of nervousness and uncertainty was hidden under false talons, the same startling shade as her mouth. And Jen was shaking a set of keys in her face. "Okay, sis, you're on your own."

Linda stared at her.

"I have a shoot tonight. On Lenox Ave."

Pig Iron bounced on his toes. "Spelled H-a-r-l-e-m."

"You're going *there*, after dark?"

"Then, when I'm done, I have to meet some clients in SoHo," she said.

"But, Jen, Harlem? That's no place for . . ."

"Just worry about yourself, Linda. Chances are I won't be around to let you in later. Soooo, prove you can be trusted. Okay?" She hooked the keys around Linda's rigid finger.

Linda was so inept in this area that she'd allowed her own house to stand in the woods unlocked for two decades. And the little monkey knew it.

So be it. She moved with dubious resolve onto a crumbling cement stoop. It's because I lack faith, she told herself when she failed on the first try. "They must have cut the key wrong," she said.

"Really? Shove over a sec." Taking Linda's key, Jen jabbed it in, did something slick with her wrist, and twisted the knob. When the door creaked open, Linda albut dived at the delicious wedge of clearance.

But Jen was too quick. Jerking her mother back by the coat sleeve, she sternly closed the door.

Pig Iron patted Linda's back. "Nice try," he said.

Again she set herself to the task.

"Sure you have it in all the way. *All the way*," Jen repeated pointedly.

Linda turned sheepishly back to her daughter.

"No luck? Look, I'll show you one more time." Jen shook out the key, as if Linda's labors had stressed the metal. Then, inserting it, she half turned to where Linda, hunkering low, looked studiously on from the sidewalk.

"Stay loose," she advised. "Locks operate on sound and very elementary principles. They're simple machines. They're, uh—"

"Aks me, aks me," Pig Iron said, raising his free hand. "They're levers!"

"With a few quirks to make things interesting," Jen said. "Feel them out. Find the right twist and they're more than glad to cooperate."

"Stop patronizing me."

In the meantime Jen had done something slick that Linda missed. Then she waved an imaginary wand, and *voilà*, the door opened with a meek sound, like a whimper.

Cold, wet, hungry, frustrated, Linda grew fierce. To

free up her arms, she pushed at Pig Iron the last of her encumbrances: gloves, umbrella, and purse.

Lovingly, Jen looped the handbag around his neck. "The man has no coat," she said. "He'll catch his death out here." Standing with her back to the open door, she bade him pass. "She da boss," he said, shrugging, and, seconds later, dissolved into the dark of the stairwell.

Jen shut the door behind him. "This time, Linda, give it all you've got."

Girding herself, Linda stepped up. She plunged the key, as instructed, dead against its physical limits. She worked it judiciously at first, and then, failing at that, tried force. Back and forth, up and down like a light switch. Nothing. Her brittle stick of a finger burned. Fighting tears, she stopped to rub it.

"Please don't cry," Jen said. "Jesus, it's freezing out." Nudging Linda to one side, she reopened the door with her own key and then paused to look down upon her mother, the pure bedraggled pleadingness of her. Jen's pale eyes were cool but not without an instant's slackening to chagrin. "Damn," she said, "I hate to have to do this, but it's becoming increasingly clear that my presence is a hindrance to you." Then, boneless as a ghost, she slipped inside. The door clicked guiltily shut.

WITHIN MINUTES THE WEATHER TOOK A nasty turn. Rain began to fall, forcing Linda to stand under the overhang. But the rain provided a kind of privacy curtain, and Jen was right. Idiocy without witness *was* almost pleasant. As an artist, Linda understood that. Her heartbeat slowed, the tightness across her shoulders eased. She talked softly to the lock. "Easy now, sweetie," she said, jiggling the key with a respectful delicacy.

Maybe the metal was cold. Once a kindly gentleman had opened the frozen lock on her Wagoneer by heating—which was it?—the lock or the key. She warmed the key between her palms, at the same time stooping to breathe on the lock.

"How you coming down there?" Linda went to the curb and squinted up. There, framed in the third-floor window, was her daughter's backlit bonnet of yellow curls. Scumbled by rain, she looked soft, Madonna-like. A face you could pray to.

"I was thinking . . .," Linda said. Did Pig Iron live here? If not, she hated to encourage the girl. But Linda was approaching a level of exhaustion that she might not rise from by eight. "Couldn't your friend let me in later?"

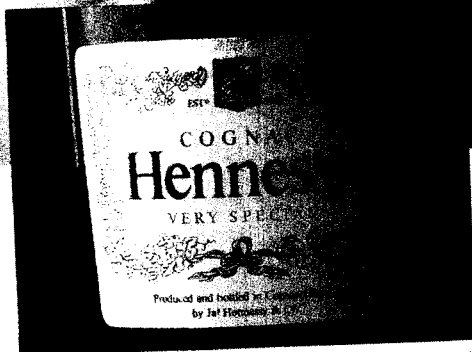
"P.I.'s my official bodyguard," Jen said.

Beast of burden. Bodyguard. "Give me a break," she muttered, shaking the icy pelt from her eyes. When she looked up, the portrait face had vanished, but the window stood mockingly agape.

So that was it. The racial thing. Had Jen come to some sophomoric conclusion about Linda's attitude toward



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blacks? What was her attitude? Linda was confused herself. What was a home boy? Was it something like a house boy? "Jennifer," she called. "Jenny Lebzelter."

When Jen reappeared, Linda said, "I have nothing against your friend."

Jen was silent behind her patented world-weary pose.

"I might have been a bit taken aback at first. A person is conditioned to react, you know. It's that way with anything unexpected or new."

"Fine. Get back to work."

Linda wanted to convey to her, too, something of the thrill she'd experienced when Pig Iron's express had blazed through the station. She'd been reminded of her silks, the same flaming incandescence, the vibrant colors and tremulous verve. But the train gave extra measure, adding to the designs a throbbing lot of vibration and sound and speed. The painted train was like wild blood through the heart of things. For a moment—before the word "scofflaw" reared up to reproach her—she'd been jealous. "I admire his work," she said.

"What time does your do begin?"

"My *reception* is at eight."

"Well, it's four-fifty-two—and counting."

Linda went back to the doorstep and sat. She hugged her knees to keep from shivering. From down the street came three diminutive Asians, all three under the auspices of one huge puce umbrella. End man left was smoking with great gusto. Linda hadn't smoked in months, but she rose now and planted herself in their path, gesturing desperately with two fingers forked at her pursed lips. Hesitating not an instant, all three men produced full packs. She accepted a cigarette from each. Then they drew her close within their circle of silver lighters. The huddle felt, not unpleasantly, like a coven or a drug deal. When she was lit, they bowed as one and left her.

Flattened against the door, she chain-smoked all three Camels. Then she checked her hair. Her spray net was sticky. Her eyes stung from running mascara. She stank of wet wool.

"Yo," she heard. "Linda. You smoking down there?"

Linda ignored her.

"Listen, I wish it didn't have to be like this. But it's for your own good. You cannot be fumbling with keys in the dead of night."

Linda positioned herself with tremulous dignity under the window. "That time you fell down the cellar steps, I was very young then. I didn't believe in danger. I forgot to hook the latch. But after that I was very careful with you."

"For God's sake."

And Jen, several days later, head still bulbous and blue from the fall, standing under the clothesline screaming for her *Binky*. "I couldn't let you have that blanket sopping wet," Linda said now. "It would have been filthy in minutes, crawling with germs."

Jen laughed. "Linda, get real," she said.

The thousand demands she'd acceded to, the few she hadn't, some of each for good reason, others out of laziness or laxity or will. Had the mix been propitious? Benevolent? Fair? "I am what I am, Jen. Within those limits, I did my best."

Pig Iron's voice drifted down with the rain. "Man," he was saying, "that mama's yo mama. Let her in."

Heartened, Linda went back to the door and waited to be received. The minutes ticked by. She hung her head. Oh, her shoes. They were soaked. The subtle taupe suede had turned the mottled plum of a sucked Italian ice. She kicked one off and hammered the door with its little sculpted heel, but gently, so as not to draw stares from passersby—a bearded man in black, a pair of lovers practicing tourist French in the rain. "*Où est la Seine?*" "*Je suis désolé.*"

She sat to put the shoe back on. It surrounded her foot like the belly of a chilled fish. Now, think, she thought. She had money, credit cards. She could certainly do better than the sub-minimum facility her daughter offered. The two-flight hike to the water closet. A shower stall set on cinder blocks not two feet from the dinette. Was she supposed to come dripping from the shower in front of Pig Iron? Jen would call her prim, bigoted, if she asked him to step out of the room.

SHE ROSE IN AN EXPLOSION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and rage that seemed sufficient in itself to propel her to shelter. She stalked off toward West Broadway. She had got as far as Ragtime when she remembered. Her purse. She'd given it to Pig Iron, along with everything else. She looked ferociously back at the tapering perspective of Jen's window ledge, for it seemed now that the black man had mugged her.

Near despair, she sidled in close under a striped awning. In the vintage shop window a plasticized couple stiffly dressed in fifties formal wear stared imperiously over her head. The dapper male mannequin brought tormentingly to mind her packed tuxedo suit, which seemed now equally antique, adrift in a past that never happened. In the clutter of the shop itself, from a time even deeper than the window's, sat a flapper in a beaded dress. She watched Linda as if Linda were something no more substantial than the late winter rain. Linda smiled, if only to make her flesh *do* something. And when the woman lowered her eyes, Linda hurried back to her post at the foot of those unattainable steps.

The door was the same shade of blue as Linda's trim, back home. She'd donated to Jen the can of leftover paint. Colonial blue, a lovely color. But my, the pimpling from beneath. Hadn't these idiots ever heard of scraping? And after having taken such a haughty stand, trying again, she was doubly offended when the ugly door prevailed against her. And when the wind picked up,

driving the rain straight at her, she hugged herself and began to cry.

She wept in rage and frustration. She wept for lack of love. For her ruined shoes and cold bone of a finger. She wept from weariness and dismay and humiliation. And she wept in shame. For the full unpublished truth of the day she had first set foot in Jennifer's place. Linda had not been appalled, as had Bud, and what shock she'd felt had instantly been swamped by longing, that hungry ghost of the girl she'd been crying, *This was my dream. At twenty-one I wanted to find myself a poet and live with him in such paucity and squalor that the world would call us blessed. My dream.* And she'd thought of her own house, so full now that she could not fill it.

When the real weeping was done, she began to cry in rasping sobs, which she was conscious of exaggerating, with added breath, for Jen's sake. But the pitiless snip stayed hidden.

She stood facing—what? East? West? The shifting folds of openness, straight on, would mark one of the rivers, she guessed. The early dark, the menacing damp, the perils of the street itself, struck her now as something that not *she* but the girl deserved. Like a woman of specific and resolute agenda, she set off again, conjuring the smart little face when Jen found her gone. Let *her* comb the empty streets. Let her place that tearful call to Bud, explaining how she managed to lose in minutes his mate of many years. A flamboyantly dressed bunch came by four abreast and bumped her off the curb. "Ruffians," she muttered, and before putting herself on course again cast a small hopeful glance back.

The vintage shop was dark now. On the wholesale places floodlights shone like miner's lamps on blackened brows. Across the way, through a set of double doors, came a trickle of dayworkers. They lowered their heads and, driving bravely into the rain, shunted toward the tunnels. Their thankless kids, waiting at home with their feet up, knew nothing of what it cost to re-upholster a sofa.

Linda crossed the intersection and entered, with some trepidation, the next block. Then, in a brief lapse of weather, from the dark hall between a barber school and a copy shop came an old woman, so saucily that Linda, reminded of pheasants venturing out from the elder brush, felt warm toward her. The woman came at her, thrusting out a palm made pebble-smooth, no doubt, by the steady

friction of small change. "A quarter, ma'am," she said, as if exacting a toll for whatever trouble lay ahead.

She was wearing as many layers as the city doors, on top a one-sleeved greatcoat studded with campaign buttons. On her blockish shoulders her small, rucked-up head seemed stuck like something vestigial. Her eyes, tiny and oily dark, seemed to demand if not cash, then proof of indigence.

Regretfully, Linda turned her hands palms up. "I'm sorry. My daughter . . .," she began, before catching herself. How could she bad-mouth her own child with neighbors she might need some day?

The woman poked into a pocket of the fourth garment in. "All I ever ask is a miserable two bits," she said. "Last guy gave it to me in pennies. I hate pennies. Here."

An embarrassment of change rained into Linda's hand. Then the skies opened again, and, cursing, the beggar scuttled back to her hole.

Linda plodded on. Or tried to. Wet suede stretched, and she kept walking out of the shoes. She thought of the depot man, dragging his strange baggage, faking a destination.

The sour reek of the river was just now reaching her. She back-stepped after her left shoe and, bending to it, looked back to see how far she'd come.

Jen's place lay concealed behind a veil formed of the gauzy contiguous nimbi of several arc lamps. The street was deserted. Linda forced herself forward another one, two, three steps. The drag on her was immense, unanswerable, a kind of lateral gravity. She felt like a harnessed toddler on a generous but precisely meted length of rope. And she had to pee. Up ahead was the whitish roil at land's end. What was left but to return to where the knot was tied?

"JENNIFER. YO, JEN."

Pig Iron came to the window.

Ah. She's calling the cops. She's organizing a search party.

"She's in the shower," he said.

"I see. Then give her this message. Tell her from now on I'll have nothing to say about the way she lives or where she goes or how. That defective refrigerator is *her* business. Fine with me if her ice cream melts and her coffee cream freezes."





"Right," he said.

"It was rude of me to impose my views. I've learned a valuable lesson. Jen's a big girl now."

She returned to the stoop smug with discovery. There it was. The key was humility. One had to be very small to pass through a daughter's doorway. The power had passed, and now she had only to wait for a triumphant Jen to welcome her home. In the time she waited, she watched the rain trapped in the floods turn quill-like and then change to wet snow.

"Yo, Mother."

*Mother?* What happened to Linda this and Linda that?

"I hate to rush you, but, hey, I'm due in Harlem at six-thirty."

Linda could think of no reply.

"Harlem, Mother, is *not* the Gauglerville Rod and Gun Club."

Linda slunk out to the street. "I thought you had a bodyguard."

"What's one tootsie of a guy against seventeen armed gangs? I want to be in and out of there before the real thugs come out."

"But, Jen, you said it was nothing . . ."

"Last week they stoned an old woman with rubble from a gutted building. You call that nothing?"

Linda was speechless.

"So step on it. I gotta roll."

Linda tried to bite her tongue. She clapped a hand over her mouth. "But . . .," she sputtered. Then, "The hell you'll roll," she yelled through cupped hands. "I'll nail your goddamn door shut!"

A pause then occurred, so oddly warm that the snow seemed to melt in the long shaft of air between them. The snow itself smelled like grace. "Ha!" Jen said, but softly. "I thought you said I was on my own."

Planting her feet for balance, Linda narrowed her eyes and stared up. If Jennifer's face was in silhouette, its challenge was perfectly clear, framed forever in the lighted window. The challenge itself had no clear answer. To enter here, Linda had to be modest, yet broad and milky-full as the woman on the train. Had to lay on and lay off. She could be pretty but less so. The same with clever and smart and arty. The mother's career goals applied not at all. And she knew it was precisely here, at the intersect of every inconsistency that lay in and between them—at the point of impasse—that their troubled little history would have to turn. "Be right up," she said.

Serenely now, she introduced the key to its simple paradox of obligations. *Push it all the way in!* Indeed! When the key met with resistance, she began to withdraw it, slowly, inching it back, not at all as Jen had instructed, twisting as she went until, at some point along the infinite plane of possibility, with a click so agreeable it startled her, the mechanism gave and the implacable wood stood impossibly ajar.

At the top of the third flight, with her second key, she unlocked a wide steel door on her first attempt. It drifted open. She drew it shut and politely knocked.

Pig Iron received her in a burgundy damask smoking jacket.

"Ah," she said. "You've been to the vintage shop. That's a smashing jacket you've got on."

He repaid her compliment with a dazzling smile and an abbreviated form of the bow he'd given his adoring public, earlier on the train.

She wiped stars of melt from her lashes, let her eyes graduate to light. The room was humid from Jen's shower, the shower stall itself a great white sweaty hulk standing like some overbearing chef near the table. On the other side of the table stood Jen herself, with a fistful of spoons.

Against the far wall was the pre-war Philco refrigerator, its yellowed door propped open an inch or so with the neck of a Schweppes bottle. An arm's length from that was Jen's painted-metal junk-shop bed. Linda hoped that the braided rug alongside would lessen the shock of stepping directly from sleep into a cement room. A brick and pine-board shelving unit held Jen's hopeful stock of photographic books and supplies.

"*La pobre mamacita*," Jen said, her head turbaned in one of Linda's outsized bath towels. Her smile was bright, beatific even, as she presented, with a languid arm, her gracious table.

The tablecloth was lovely, of Battenberg lace, a wedding gift Linda had never used. Tub butter on a torn sheet of foil, the croissants mounded on a hot-pad. The cups upside down on their cracked saucers came from God knows where. And there, center stage, the lustre teapot, breathing evenly through its injured spout, braving the scrape of daily disadvantage with a gallant challenging dignity that suggested . . . She turned to her daughter, astonished.

Jen fiddled at great length with the placement of a teaspoon. "You know," she said, without looking up, "it's not the greatest night to be running around town. Pig Iron was wondering—well, he thinks it might not be a bad idea to scrap our plans and just tag along to your reception. They serving champagne or anything?"

To keep from tracking up the floor, Linda left her shoes in the hallway. She was surprised to find pennies in her hand. They were dirty and wet. Wiping each one carefully on her sleeve, she dropped them one at a time into her pocket. Just in case. She scanned the premises once again. The massive room had the alien-familiar, irresistibly menacing appeal of a recurrent dream.

She glanced at Pig Iron, standing with his hand on the door, looking as foolish as any man trapped in a complicated female drama. Then, breathing the steamy, overheated air like some kind of cure, she tiptoed over the threshold, knowing in her bones that she might grow old crossing into a daughter's house. □



## FIRST ENCOUNTERS

## JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR grew up in the closed society of proper bourgeois Paris, so to go to the Sorbonne at all, much less to study philosophy, was a hard-won success. To her father, philosophy was "jibberish"; her mother worried that she would lose her faith, overlooking the fact that this had already happened. Beauvoir knew she would have no dowry, ergo no husband; she should at least be able to choose her career.

By her third year she was acquainted with most of her fellow students, with the glaring exception of a young man of brilliant mind but dubious reputation (alcohol, women), Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre and a few close friends shared a private language, heavy on the *bon mot sarcastique*, and they labeled Beauvoir "the badly dressed one with the beautiful blue eyes." Still, he knew she was expected to score very high on exams that he himself had failed the previous year, for not sticking to the subject. He sent her his drawing of Leibnitz, the subject of her thesis, and asked to be introduced.

Toward that end Beauvoir was invited to a study session on a Monday morning in June of 1929, in Sartre's room at the Cité Universitaire, for the purpose of expounding on Leibnitz. She had long yearned to be included in this unorthodox group, and was terrified that they might find her "silly," although the one known for high jinks was Sartre. As host, however, he was reassuringly deferential. Shorter than she (under five feet), he wore a "more or less clean" shirt and slippers. The room was a shambles: the bed unmade, ashtrays unemptied, books and papers everywhere. He escorted her ceremoniously to the only chair. She had barely started on Leibnitz when the others declared him impossibly boring, but no one suggested that that was her fault, so she stayed for a discussion of Rousseau, interspersed with philosophical parodies by Sartre to Offenbach's music. It was a day that authenticated her dreams. A dowerless young woman had other options than marriage, of which the bourgeois life need never be a part. —Nancy Caldwell Sorel



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*"All the new thinking is about loss.  
In this it resembles all the old thinking."* — ROBERT HASS

THE ART OF

# LOSING



## READING THE WATERFALL

Those pages he turned down in peaks  
at the corners are kerchiefs now, tied  
to the last light of each favorite tree  
where he paused, marking my path  
as surely as if he'd ordered squads  
of birds to rustle leaves overhead, and  
I do look up often, musing into  
his warmed-over nests or letting  
a thrum of recognition pulsate *koto*-like  
as if his head were over my shoulder  
in a cool fog allowed to think its way  
down a marble staircase shorn of its  
footfalls. In a child's crude pea-pod  
canoe my amber beads float seaward  
like a cargo meant to be lost. How often  
I am held alive by half a matchstick,  
remembering his voice across rooms

and going when called to hear some line  
of poetry read aloud in our two-minded way  
like adding a wing for ballast and  
discovering flight. So much of love  
is curved there where his pen bracketed  
the couplet mid-page, that my unused  
trousseau seems to beckon deeply  
like a forehead pressed into paradox  
by too much invitation. He lets me dress  
hurriedly for the journey as a way to better  
leave me what vanishes according to  
its readiness, as he is ready and glides now  
into my long bedside Sunday  
until we are like the dead pouring water  
for the dead, unaware that our slender thirst  
is unquenchable.

— Tess Gallagher

## WHAT THE OLD CHEYENNE WOMEN AT SAND CREEK KNEW

(Sand Creek Massacre: November 29, 1864)

All along the creek bank  
they crouched holding the children  
until the last warrior was dead  
and the soldiers turned slowly toward them  
like men in a bad dream.  
The old women knew what was coming.  
All along the creek bank  
they tore off their shawls,  
their shirts, their scarves,  
anything close at hand  
and they covered the eyes of the children.  
The old women knew that if young children  
saw what men in a bad dream could do  
they would not die a clean death  
so they covered the eyes of the children  
and made no move to run.  
The old women knew it was time.

All along the creek bank  
they sat with their eyes wide open  
watching and rocking the swaddled children  
and when the soldiers opened fire  
they tumbled into the creek,  
the dead children in their arms  
with eyes covered  
so they would not see  
what men in a bad dream could do.  
All along the creek bank  
the old women knew how to move  
from one dream to another  
and take the children safely through;  
the old women knew  
what men in a bad dream could do.

— Red Hawk

## EROSION

They are small and flat, riverbed stones  
that can hardly believe the long journey,  
the grand lapidary of wind and water,  
has led them, finally,  
to a snug fit in the soft delta  
of the palm, to be rubbed and rubbed again  
in the recesses of the pocket.  
They are unlikely companions, one polished,  
the product of some refinement,  
tear-shaped and, it seems, a bit frail,  
the other, an earnest little piece of a mountain,  
cut and tumbled from the scree one day,  
a rock *nouveau*, a rock's rock.

There is justice in the world,  
and the rocks are quite prepared  
to ride it out in this bag of notions,  
forever amongst car keys, chapstick,  
an occasional ticket stub—  
because if it wasn't here,  
it would be as it is elsewhere:

the world grinding itself to dust.

— Mark Svenvold

## SONG

A yellow coverlet  
in the greenwood:  
spread the corners wide to the dim, stoop-shouldered pines.  
Let blank sky  
be your canopy.  
Fringe the bedspread with the wall of lapsing stones.  
Here faith has cut  
in upright granite  
"Meet me in Heaven" at the grave of each child  
lost the same year,  
three, buried here  
a century ago. Roots and mosses hold  
in the same bed  
mother, daughter, dead  
together, in one day. "Lord, remember the poor"  
their crumbling letters pray.  
I turn away.  
I shall meet you nowhere, in no transfigured hour.  
On soft, matted soil  
blueberry bushes crawl,  
each separate berry a small, hot globe of tintured sun.  
Crushed on the tongue  
it releases a pang  
of flesh. Tender flesh, slipped from its skin,  
preserves its blue heat  
down my throat.

— Rosanna Warren



## ENDING WITH A LINE FROM *LEAR*

I will try to remember. It was light.  
It was also dark, in the grave. I could feel  
how dark it was, how black it would be  
without my father. When he was gone.  
But he was not gone, not yet. He was only  
a corpse, and I could still touch him  
that afternoon. Earlier the same afternoon.  
This is the one thing that scares me:  
losing my father. I don't want him to go.  
I am a young man. I will never be older.  
I am wearing a tie and a watch. The sky,  
gray, hangs over everything. Today  
the sky has no curve to it, and no end.

He is deep into his mission. He has business  
to attend to. He wears a tie but no watch.  
I will skip a lot of what happens next.  
Then the moment comes. Everything, everything  
has been said, and the wheels start to turn.  
They roll, the straps unwind, and the coffin  
begins to descend. Into the awful damp.  
Into the black center of the earth. I  
am being left behind. The center of my body  
sinks down into the cold fire of the grave.  
But still my feet stand on top of the dirt.  
My father's grave. I will never again.  
Never. Never. Never. Never. Never.

— Marvin Bell

## CARVER

There was no landscape so hard  
he could not return  
with its poetry.

And there it was—the champagne  
hidden in the bathroom,  
the blocked ear, the peacock

strutting through  
the labourer's dining room;  
everything we had missed

out of self-regard  
or loftiness. People who die  
in the stories die simply,

for no point, and those left  
can only comfort,  
not turn away. Now the teacher

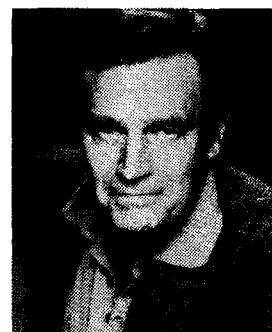
leaves the room, and the students  
hush under the loud clock.  
Whatever they can see

through the window,  
the flat earth too poor and dry  
for growing, they are on their own.

— Jeffrey Skinner

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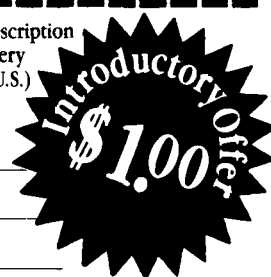
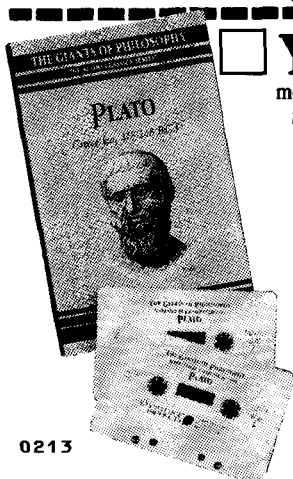
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*It seems doubtful that making most drugs legal would significantly increase the number of addicts but certain that it would reduce crime and save society money*

# THE ECONOMICS OF LEGALIZING DRUGS

BY RICHARD J. DENNIS

**L**AST YEAR FEDERAL AGENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BROKE THE SIX-dollar lock on a warehouse and discovered twenty tons of cocaine. The raid was reported to be the largest seizure of illegal narcotics ever. Politicians and law-enforcement officials heralded it as proof not only of the severity of our drug problem but also of the success of our interdiction efforts, and the need for more of the same. However, in reality the California raid was evidence of nothing but

the futility and irrationality of our current approach to illegal drugs. It is questionable whether the raid prevented a single person from buying cocaine. Addicts were not driven to seek treatment. No drug lord or street dealer was put out of business. The event had no perceptible impact on the public's attitude toward drug use. People who wanted cocaine still wanted it—and got it.

If the raid had any effect at all, it was perverse. The street price of cocaine in southern California probably rose temporarily, further enriching the criminal network now terrorizing the nation's inner cities. William Bennett, the director of national drug-control policy, and his fellow moral authoritarians were offered another opportunity to alarm an already overwrought public with a fresh gust of rhetoric. New support was given to a Bush Administration plan that is meant to reduce supply but in fact guarantees more money to foreign drug lords, who will soon become the richest private individuals in history.

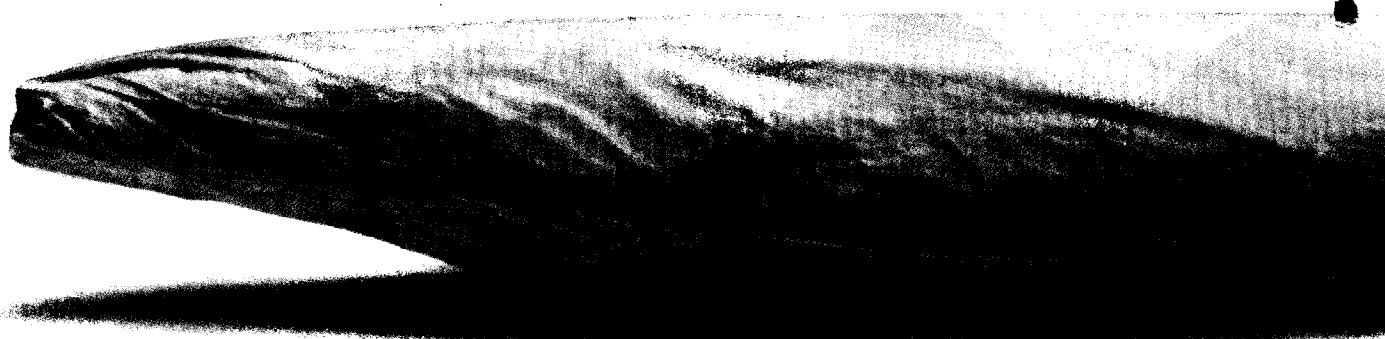
Indeed, Americans have grown so hysterical about the drug problem that few public figures dare appear soft on drugs or say anything dispassionate about the situation. In a 1989 poll 54 percent of Americans cited drugs as the

nation's greatest threat. Four percent named unemployment. It is time, long past time, to take a clear-eyed look at illegal drugs and ask what government and law enforcement can really be expected to do.

Drug illegality has the same effect as a regressive tax: its chief aim is to save relatively wealthy potential users of drugs like marijuana and cocaine from self-destruction, at tremendous cost to the residents of inner cities. For this reason alone, people interested in policies that help America's poor should embrace drug legalization. It would dethrone drug dealers in the ghettos and release inner-city residents from their status as hostages.

Once the drug war is considered in rational terms, the solution becomes obvious: declare peace. Legalize the stuff. Tax it and regulate its distribution, as liquor is now taxed and regulated. Educate those who will listen. Help those who need help.

Arguments for the benefits of drug legalization have appeared frequently in the press, most of them making the point that crime and other social hazards might be reduced as a result. This article presents an economic analysis of the benefits of legalizing drugs.





## Some Wrong Ways to Discuss the Drug Problem

**I**N ORDER TO MAKE ANY SORT OF SANE ARGUMENT about drugs, of course, we have to decide what the problem is. That isn't as simple as it might seem, Bennett's thirty-second sound bites notwithstanding. It's easier to say what the drug problem is not.

The drug problem is not a moral issue. There's a streak of puritanism in the national soul, true, but most Americans are not morally opposed to substances that alter one's mind and mood. That issue was resolved in 1933, with the repeal of Prohibition. There is no question that drugs used to excess are harmful; so is alcohol. Americans seem to have no moral difficulty with the notion that adults should be allowed to use alcohol as they see fit, as long as others are not harmed.

The drug problem is not the country's most important health issue. The use of heroin and cocaine can result in addiction and death; so can the use of alcohol and tobacco. In fact, some researchers estimate the yearly per capita mortality rate of tobacco among smokers at more than a hundred times that of cocaine among cocaine users. If the drug-policy director is worried about the effect on public health of substance abuse, he should spend most of his time talking about cigarettes and whiskey.

The drug problem is not entirely a societal issue—at least not in the sense that it is portrayed as one by politicians and the media. Drug dealing is a chance for people without legitimate opportunity. The problem of the underclass will never be solved by attacking it with force of arms.

So what is the problem? The heart of it is money. What most Americans

want is less crime and less profit for inner-city thugs and Colombian drug lords. Less self-destruction by drug users would be nice, but what people increasingly demand is an end to the foreign and domestic terrorism—financed by vast amounts of our own money—associated with the illegal drug trade.

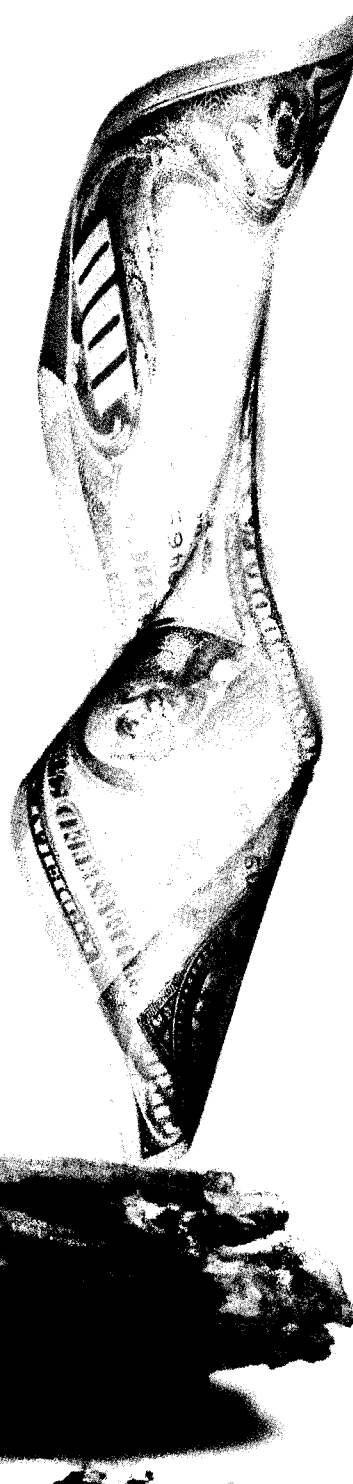
This, as it happens, is a problem that can be solved in quick and pragmatic fashion, by legalizing the sale of most drugs to adults. Virtually overnight crime and corruption would be reduced. The drug cartels would be shattered. Public resources could be diverted to meaningful education and treatment programs.

The alternative—driving up drug prices and increasing public costs with an accelerated drug war—inevitably will fail to solve anything. Instead of making holy war on the drug barons, the President's plan subsidizes them.

Laws protecting children should obviously be retained. Some might question the effectiveness of combining legal drug use by adults with harsh penalties for the sale of drugs to minors. But effective statutory-rape laws demonstrate that society can maintain a distinction between the behavior of adults and that of minors when it truly believes such a distinction is warranted.

Legalization would require us to make some critical distinctions among drugs and drug users, of course. The Administration's plan approaches the drug problem as a seamless whole. But in fact crack and heroin are harmful in ways that marijuana is not. This failure to distinguish among different drugs and their consequences serves only to discredit the anti-drug effort, especially among young people. It also disperses law-enforcement efforts, rendering them hopelessly ineffective. Instead of investing immense resources in a vain attempt to control the behavior of adults, we should put our money where the crisis is. Why spend anything to prosecute marijuana users in a college dormitory when the focus should be on the crack pusher in the Bronx schoolyard?

The appropriate standard in deciding if a drug should be made legal for adults ought to be whether it is more likely than alcohol to cause harm to an



innocent party. If not, banning it cannot be justified while alcohol remains legal. For example, a sensible legalization plan would allow users of marijuana to buy it legally. Small dealers could sell it legally but would be regulated, as beer dealers are now in states where beer is sold in grocery stores. Their suppliers would be licensed and regulated. Selling marijuana to minors would be criminal.

Users of cocaine should be able to buy it through centers akin to state liquor stores. It is critical to remove the black-market profit from cocaine in order to destabilize organized crime and impoverish pushers. Selling cocaine to minors would be criminal, as it is now, but infractions could be better policed if effort were concentrated on them. Any black market that might remain would be in sales of crack or sales to minors, transactions that are now estimated to account for 20 percent of drug sales.

Cocaine runs the spectrum from coca leaf to powder to smokable crack; it's the way people take it that makes the difference. Crack's effects on individual behavior and its addictive potential place it in a category apart from other forms of cocaine. The actual degree of harm it does to those who use it is still to be discovered, but for the sake of argument let's assume that it presents a clear danger to people who come in contact with the users. A crack user, therefore, should be subject to a civil fine, and mandatory treatment after multiple violations. Small dealers should have their supplies seized and be subject to moderate punishment for repeat offenses. Major dealers, however, should be subject to the kinds of sentences that are now given. And any adult convicted of selling crack to children should face the harshest prison sentence our criminal-justice system can mete out.

The same rules should apply to any drug that presents a substantial threat to others.

A serious objection to legalizing cocaine while crack remains illegal is that cocaine could be bought, turned into crack, and sold. But those who now buy powder cocaine could take it home and make it into crack, and very few do so. Moreover, legal cocaine would most likely be consumed in different settings and under different circumstances than still-illegal crack would be. Researchers believe that more-benign settings reduce the probability of addiction. Legalization could make it less likely that cocaine users will become crack users. In addition, an effective dose of crack is already so cheap that price is not much of a deterrent to those who want to try it. No price reduction as a result of the legalization of cocaine, then, should lead to a significant increase in the number of crack users.

As for heroin, the advent of methadone clinics shows that society has realized that addicts require maintenance. But there is little practical difference between methadone and heroin, and methadone clinics don't get people off methadone. Heroin addicts should receive what they require, so that they don't have to steal to sup-

port their habit. This would make heroin unprofitable for its pushers. And providing addicts with access to uninfected needles would help stop the spread of AIDS and help lure them into treatment programs.

## What the Drug War Costs and What We Could Save

**T**HE MAJOR ARGUMENT AGAINST LEGALIZATION, and one that deserves to be taken seriously, is a possible increase in drug use and addiction. But it can be shown that if reasonable costs are assigned to all aspects of the drug problem, the benefits of drug peace would be large enough to offset even a doubling in the number of addicts.

Any numerical cost-benefit analysis of drug legalization versus the current drug war rests on assumptions that are difficult to substantiate. The figures for the costs of drug use must be estimates, and so the following analysis is by necessity illustrative rather than definitive. But the numbers used in the analysis below are at least of the right magnitude; most are based on government data. These assumptions, moreover, give the benefit of the doubt to the drug warriors and shortchange proponents of drug legalization.

The statistical assumptions that form the basis of this cost-benefit analysis are as follows:

■ *The social cost of all drug use at all levels can be estimated by assuming that America now has two million illicit-drug addicts.* Slightly more than one million addicts use cocaine (including crack) about four times a week; 500,000 addicts use heroin at about the same rate. This means that there are about 1.5 million hardcore addicts. Some experts argue that the figures for addiction should be higher. An estimate of the social cost of drug use should also take into account casual use, even if the social cost of it is arguable; 10 million people, at most, use cocaine and other dangerous drugs monthly. To ensure a fair estimate of social cost, let's assume that America now has two million drug addicts.

■ *Legalization would result in an immediate and permanent 25 percent increase in the number of addicts and the costs associated with them.* This projection is derived by estimating the number of people who would try hard drugs if they were legalized and then estimating how many of them would end up addicted. In past years—during a time when marijuana was more or less decriminalized—approximately 60 million Americans tried marijuana and almost 30 million tried cocaine, America's most popular hard drug. (It is fair to assume that nearly all of those who tried cocaine also tried marijuana and that those who haven't tried marijuana in the past twenty-five years will not decide to try decriminalized cocaine.) This leaves 30 million people who have tried marijuana but not cocaine, and who might be at risk to try legal, inexpensive cocaine.

In a 1985 survey of people who voluntarily stopped using cocaine, 21 percent claimed they did so because they feared for their health, 12 percent because they were pressured by friends and family, and 12 percent because the drug was too expensive. The reasons of the other half of those surveyed were unspecified, but for the purpose of this exercise we will assume that they stopped for the same reasons in the same proportions as the other respondents. (Interestingly, the survey did not mention users who said they had stopped because cocaine is illegal or out of fear of law enforcement.) It seems reasonable to assume that many people would decide not to use legalized drugs for the same reasons that these experimenters quit. Therefore, of the 30 million people estimated to be at risk of trying legal cocaine, only about a quarter might actually try it—the quarter that is price-sensitive, because the price of cocaine, once the drug was legalized, would plummet. This leaves us with approximately 7.5 million new cocaine users. How many of them could we expect to become cocaine addicts? The estimate that there are now one million cocaine addicts suggests a one-in-thirty chance of addiction through experimentation. Thus from the 7.5 million new users we could expect about 250,000 new addicts, or an increase of 25 percent over the number of cocaine addicts that we now have. We can assume about the same increase in the number of users of other hard drugs.

Those who argue that wide availability must mean significantly higher usage overlook the fact that there is no economic incentive for dealers to push dirt-cheap drugs. Legalization might thus lead to less rather than more drug use, particularly by children and teenagers. Also, the public evinces little interest in trying legalized drugs. Last year, at the direction of this author, the polling firm Targeting Systems Inc., in Arlington, Virginia, asked a nationwide sample of 600 adults, "If cocaine were legalized, would you personally consider purchasing it or not?" Only one percent said they would.

■ *The drug war will result in a 25 percent decrease in drug use.* That's the midpoint in William Bennett's ten-year plan to cut drug use by 50 percent by the year 2000. Since this figure is based on Bennett's official prediction, we might expect it to be highly optimistic. But to demonstrate the enormous benefits of legalization, let's accept his rosy scenario.

■ *The drug war will cost government at all levels \$30 billion a year.* Keeping drugs illegal costs state and local law-enforcement agencies approximately \$10 billion a year—a conservative figure derived from the costs of arresting, prosecuting, and imprisoning several hundred thousand people a year for drug violations. Bennett recently implied before Congress that state governments will need to spend as much as \$10 billion in new money when he was asked about what it will cost to keep in prison a higher proportion of the country's 20 million or more users of

hard and soft drugs. The drug war will also cost the federal government about \$10 billion a year, mostly in law enforcement—about what Congress has agreed to spend in the next fiscal year.

If marijuana and cocaine were legalized and crack and all drugs for children remained illegal, about 80 percent of current illegal drug use would become legal. This would permit savings of 80 percent—or \$8 billion—of the current costs of state and local law enforcement. By rolling back the war on drugs, we could save up to all \$20 billion of projected new federal and state expenditures.

■ *The current dollar volume of the drug trade is approximately \$100 billion a year.* If Bennett's prediction is accurate and drug consumption is cut by half over the next ten years, Colombian drug lords will still receive, on average, \$3.75 billion a year, assuming that they net five percent of gross receipts—a conservative estimate. The money reaped by drug lords can be used for weapons, planes, and bombs, which could necessitate U.S. expenditures of at least one dollar to combat every dollar of drug profits if a drug war turned into real fighting.

If legalized, taxed drugs were sold for a seventh or an eighth of their current price—a level low enough for illegal dealing to be financially unattractive—the taxes could bring in at least \$10 billion at the current level of usage.

■ *The most important—and most loosely defined—variable is the social cost of drug use.* The term "social cost" is used indiscriminately. A narrow definition includes only health costs and taxes lost to the government through loss of income, and a broad definition counts other factors, such as the loss of the personal income itself and the value of stolen property associated with drug use. The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration has estimated that drug and alcohol abuse cost the nation as much as \$175 billion a year, of which alcohol abuse alone accounts for at least \$115 billion. These figures probably include costs not really related to drug use, as a result of the Administration's zeal to dramatize the drug crisis. We will assume that \$50 billion a year is a realistic estimate of the share for drug use.

Once these usually qualitative factors have been assigned numbers, it is possible to estimate how much the drug war costs in an average year and how much drug peace might save us. Again, this assumes that 25 percent fewer people in a mid-point year will use drugs owing to a successful drug war and 25 percent more people will use drugs with the establishment of drug peace.

If we choose drug peace as opposed to drug war, we'll save \$10 billion a year in federal law enforcement, \$10 billion a year in new state and local prosecution, about \$8 billion a year in other law-enforcement costs (80 percent of the current \$10 billion a year), about \$6 billion a year in the value of stolen property associated with drug use (80



percent of the current \$7.5 billion), and \$3.75 billion a year by eliminating the need to match the Colombians' drug profits dollar for dollar. We'll also benefit from taxes of \$12.5 billion. These social gains amount to \$50.25 billion.

If use rises 25 percent, instead of declining by that amount, it will result in a social cost of \$25 billion (50 percent of \$50 billion). Therefore, the net social gain of drug peace is \$25.25 billion. If legalization resulted in an immediate and permanent increase in use of more than 25 percent, the benefits of drug peace would narrow. But additional tax revenue would partly make up for the shrinkage. For example, if the increase in use was 50 percent instead of 25 percent, that would add another \$12.5 billion in social costs per year but would contribute another \$2.5 billion in tax revenue.

At the rate at which those numbers converge, almost a 100 percent increase in the number of addicts would be required before the net benefits of drug peace equaled zero. This would seem to be a worst-case scenario. But to the drug warriors, any uncertainty is an opportunity to fan the flames of fear. Last year Bennett wrote, in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Of course, no one . . . can say with certainty what would happen in the U.S. if drugs were suddenly to become a readily purchased product. We do know, however, that whenever drugs have been cheaper and more easily obtained, drug use—and addiction—have skyrocketed." Bennett cited two examples to prove his thesis: a fortyfold increase in the number of heroin addicts in Great Britain since the drug began to be legally prescribed there, and a 350 percent increase in alcohol consumption in the United States after Prohibition.

In fact experts are far from certain about the outcome of the British experiment. The statistics on the increase in the number of drug abusers are unreliable. All that is known is that a significant rise in the number of addicts seeking treatment took place. Moreover, according to some estimates, Britain has approximately sixty-two addicts or regular users of heroin per 100,000 population (for a total of 30,000 to 35,000), while the United States has 209 heroin addicts or users per 100,000 population, for a total of 500,000. And very few British heroin addicts engage in serious crime, unlike heroin addicts in America. Bennett's criticism notwithstanding, the British apparently have broken the link between heroin addiction and violent crime.

As for Prohibition, its effects were hardly as dramatic as Bennett implied. During 1916–1919 per capita consumption of pure alcohol among the U.S. drinking-age population was 1.96 gallons a year; during Prohibition it dropped to 0.90 gallons; after Repeal, during 1936–1941, it went up about 70 percent, to 1.54 gallons.

And how does Bennett explain the experience of the Netherlands, where the decriminalization of drugs has resulted in decreased use? Does he think that what made all the difference in Holland is the fact that it has a small-

er underclass than we do? In essence, the Dutch policy involves vigorous enforcement against dealers of hard drugs, official tolerance of soft drugs such as marijuana and hashish, and decriminalization of all users. The number of marijuana users began decreasing shortly after the Dutch government decriminalized marijuana, in 1976. In 1984 about four percent of Dutch young people age ten to eighteen reported having smoked marijuana—roughly a third the rate among minors in the United States. In Amsterdam the number of heroin addicts has declined from 9,000 in 1984 to fewer than 6,000 today. Over that same period the average age of addicts has risen from twenty-six to thirty-one, indicating that few new users have taken up the habit. And there is no evidence that crack has made inroads among Dutch addicts, in contrast to its prevalence in America.

Amsterdam is a capital city close in size (population 695,000), if not in culture and economic demographics, to Washington, D.C. (population 604,000). Amsterdam had forty-six homicides last year, of which perhaps 30 percent were related to the drug trade. Washington had 438 homicides, 60 to 80 percent of which were drug-related. The rate of homicides per 100,000 population was 6.6 in Amsterdam, less than a tenth the rate of 72.5 in Washington.

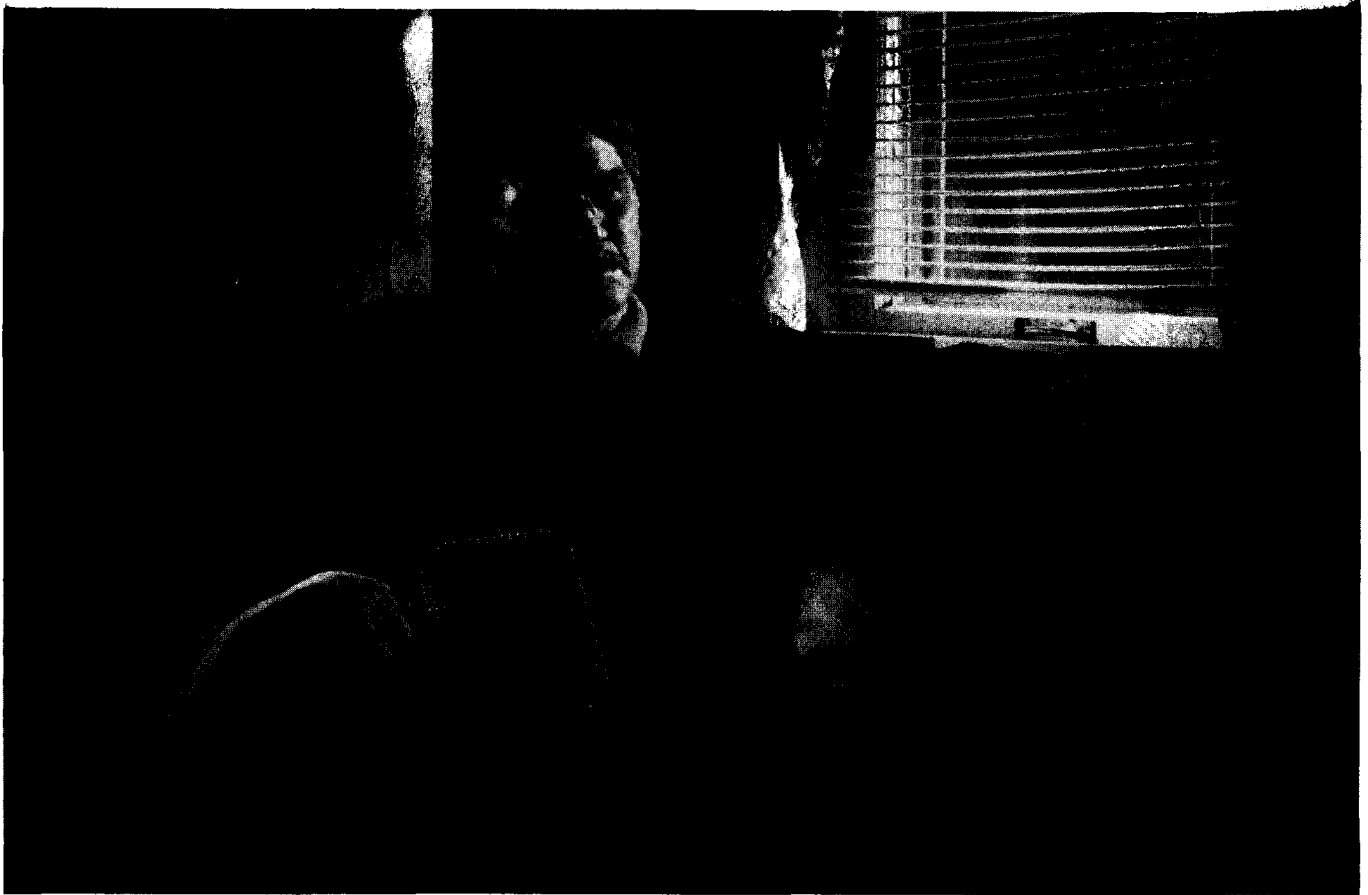
Holland's strategy is one of only two that have been shown to cause a real decline in drug use. The other is Singapore's, which consists of imposing the death penalty on people caught in possession of as little as fifteen grams of heroin. If this is Bennett's fallback position, perhaps he should say so explicitly.

### Some Objections Considered

**T**HE FEAR THAT LEGALIZATION WOULD LEAD TO increased drug use and addiction is not, of course, the only basis on which legalization is opposed. We should address other frequently heard objections here.

■ *Crack is our No. 1 drug problem. Legalizing other drugs while crack remains illegal won't solve the problem.* Although crack has captured the lion's share of public attention, marijuana has always commanded the bulk of law-enforcement interest. Despite de facto urban decriminalization, more than a third of all drug arrests occur in connection with marijuana—mostly for mere possession. Three fourths of all violations of drug laws relate to marijuana, and two thirds of all people charged with violation of federal marijuana laws are sentenced to prison (state figures are not available).

Crack appears to account for about 10 percent of the total dollar volume of the drug trade, according to National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates of the number of regular crack users. Legalizing other drugs would free up most of the law-enforcement resources currently focused on less dangerous substances and their users. It's



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true that as long as crack remains illegal, there will be a black market and associated crime. But we would still reap most of the benefits of legalization outlined above.

■ *Legalization would result in a huge loss in productivity and in higher health-care costs.* In truth, productivity lost to drugs is minor compared with productivity lost to alcohol and cigarettes, which remain legal. Hundreds of variables affect a person's job performance, ranging from the consumption of whiskey and cigarettes to obesity and family problems. On a purely statistical level it can be demonstrated that marital status affects productivity, yet we do not allow employers to dismiss workers on the basis of that factor.

If legal drug use resulted in higher social costs, the government could levy a tax on the sale of drugs in some rough proportion to the monetary value of those costs—as it does now for alcohol and cigarettes. This wouldn't provide the government with a financial stake in addiction. Rather, the government would be making sure that users of socially costly items paid those social costs. Funds from the tax on decriminalized drugs could be used for anti-drug advertising, which could be made more effective by a total ban on drug advertising. A government that licenses the sale of drugs must actively educate its citizens about their dangers, as Holland does in discouraging young people from using marijuana.

■ *Drug legalization implies approval.* One of the glories of American life is that many things that are not condoned by society at large, such as atheism, offensive speech, and heavy-metal music, are legal. The well-publicized death of Len Bias and other harrowing stories have carried the message far and wide that drugs are dangerous. In arguing that legalization would persuade people that drug use is safe, drug warriors underestimate our intelligence.

■ *Any restriction on total legalization would lead to continuing, substantial corruption.* Under the plan proposed here, restrictions would continue on the sale of crack and on the sale of all drugs to children. Even if black-market corruption continued in those areas, we would experience an immediate 80 percent reduction in corruption overall.

■ *Legalization is too unpredictable and sweeping an action to be undertaken all at once. It would be better to establish several test areas first, and evaluate the results.* The results of such a trial would probably not further the case of either side. If use went up in the test area, it could be argued that this was caused by an influx of people from areas where drugs were still illegal; if use went down, it could be argued that the area chosen was unrepresentative.

■ *Even if current drugs are legalized, much more destructive drugs will be developed in the future.* The most destructive

current drug is crack, which would remain illegal. Many analysts believe that the development of crack was a marketing strategy, since powder cocaine was too expensive for many users. If cocaine had been legal, crack might never have been marketed. In any case, if a drug presents a clear danger to bystanders, it should not be legal.

■ *No matter how the government distributes drugs, users will continue to seek greater quantities and higher potency on the black market.* If the government restricts the amount of a drug that can be distributed legally, legalization will fail. It must make drugs available at all levels of quantity and potency. The government should regulate the distributors but not the product itself. The model should be the distribution of alcohol through state-regulated liquor stores.

■ *Legalizing drugs would ensure that America's inner cities remain places of hopelessness and despair.* If drugs disappeared tomorrow from America's ghettos, the ghettos would remain places of hopelessness and despair. But legalization would put most drug dealers out of business and remove the main source of financing for violent gangs. At the least, legalization would spare the inner cities from drug-driven terrorism.

■ *Marijuana in itself may be relatively harmless, but it is a "gateway drug."* Legalization would lead its users to more harmful and addictive drugs. While government studies show some correlation between marijuana use and cocaine addiction, they also show that tobacco and alcohol use correlate with drug addiction. Moreover, keeping marijuana illegal forces buyers into an illegal market, where they are likely to be offered other drugs. Finally, 60 million Americans have tried marijuana, and there are one million cocaine addicts. If marijuana is a gateway drug, the gate is narrow.

■ *Legalizing drugs would aggravate the growing problem of "crack babies."* The sale of crack would remain illegal. Even so, it is difficult to believe that anyone ignorant or desperate enough to use crack while pregnant would be deterred by a law. Laws against drug use are more likely to deter users from seeking treatment. Crack babies probably would have a better chance in a less censorious environment, in which their mothers had less to fear from seeking treatment.

Drug use in the United States can be seen as a symptom of recent cultural changes that have led to an erosion of traditional values and an inability to replace them. There are those who are willing to pay the price to try to save people from themselves. But there are surely just as many who would pay to preserve a person's right to be wrong. To the pragmatist, the choice is clear: legalization is the best bet. □



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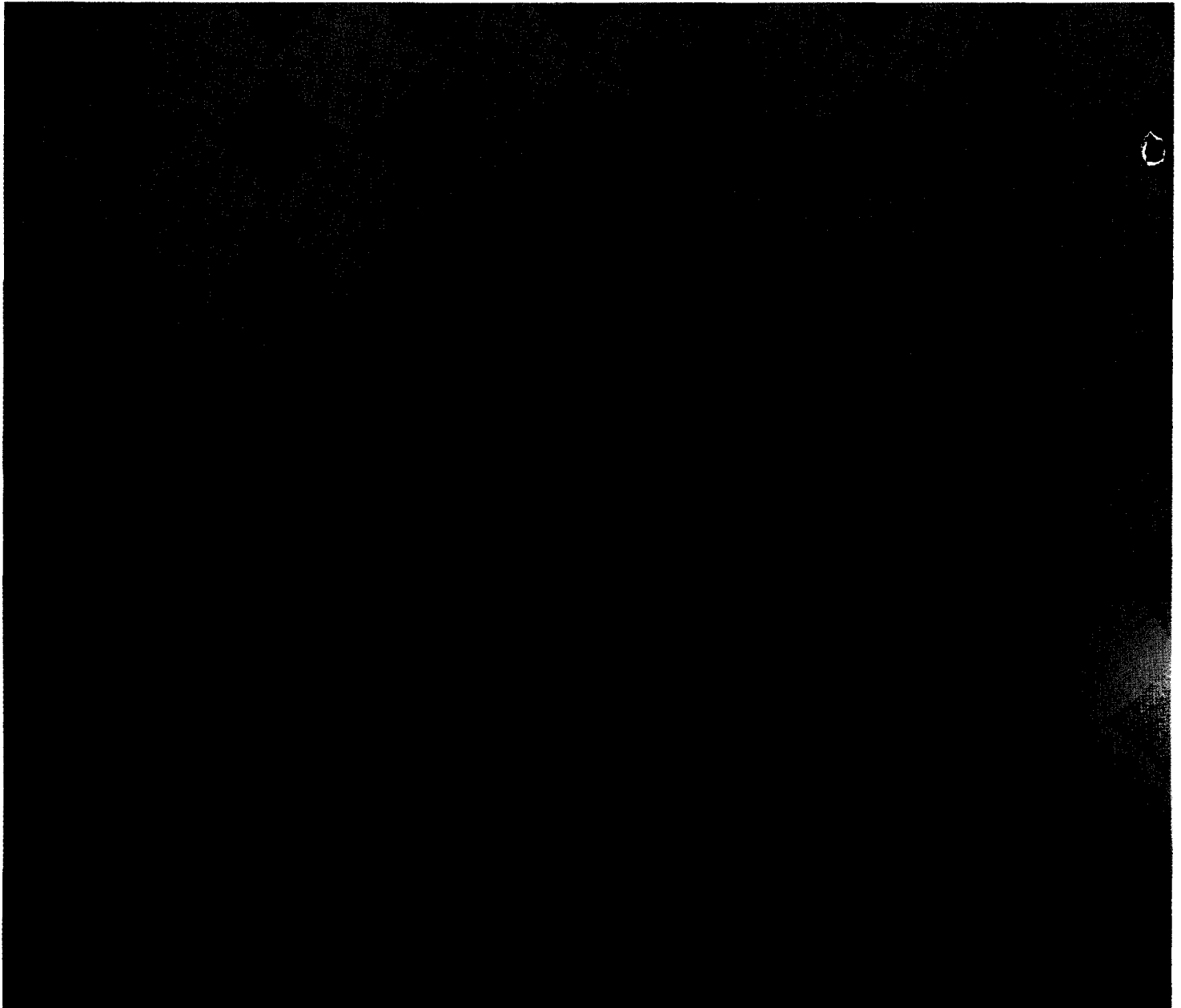
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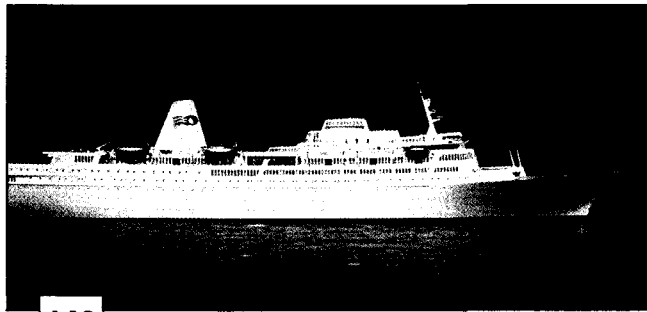


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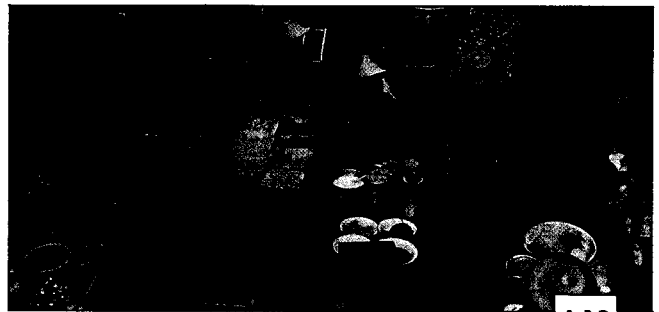
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## NOTABLES TALK ABOUT THEIR FAVORITE PLACES

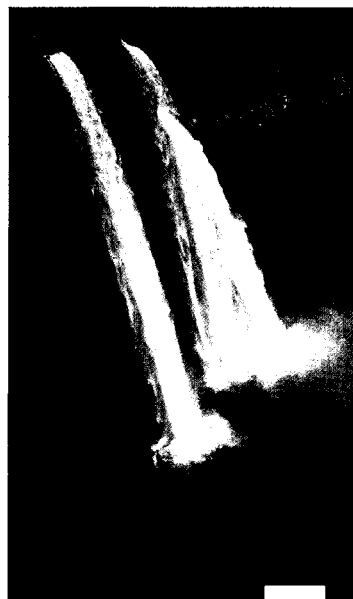
"Tell us about your favorite place," we asked the men and women named at right. Some of them are renowned as travelers, others are renowned *and* travelers, and still others are simply enviably well-informed about places and activities that figure large in other people's winter travel plans, or travel fantasies. All were generous enough to share their expertise and their secrets.

We hope you enjoy the world of travel experiences that they conjure up on these pages—and, even more so, any experiences of your own that one or another of these interviews may tempt you toward.

Information about or additional copies of "The Inquisitive Traveler's Winter Vacations" are available from Terry McCaffrey, Travel Advertising Manager, The Atlantic, 599 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10022; (212) 326-5350.



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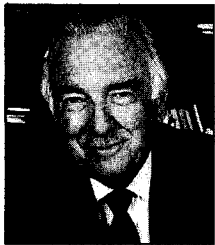
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# SUNNING

## "PLENTY OF VARIETY"

*Walter Cronkite anchors in the Caribbean*



Once called the nation's most trusted newsman, former CBS anchorman **WALTER CRONKITE** keeps busy as a special correspondent and with his CBS Radio show,

*The Twentieth Century. Cronkite and his wife, Betsy, regularly sail the Caribbean on their forty-eight-foot sailboat, the Wynjte.*

"THE THING ABOUT the Caribbean that strikes me is that I wish everybody else didn't know about it. It's typical of nearly all the great vacation spots, and that is it's getting a little overcrowded. But it still retains, for the sailor, anyway, great delights.

We particularly favor the British Vir-

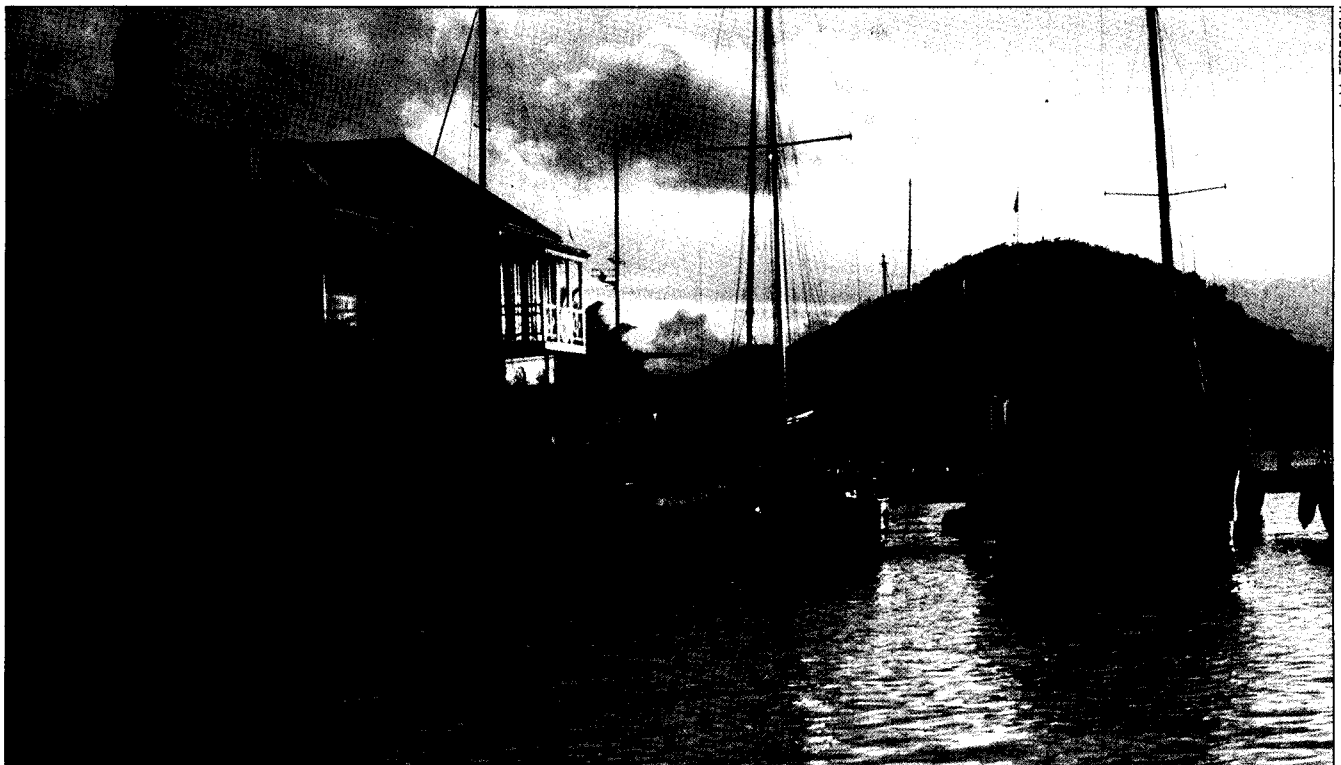
gin Islands, with its principal base of Tortola. For sailing and for entertaining people aboard one's boat it is almost perfect. The sailing is great, because the Sir Francis Drake Channel, around which are grouped the British Virgin Islands, is reasonably calm. The distances between marvelous beaches and coves in which one can anchor are short. You can swim off the side of the boat, which I prefer so people don't bring a lot of sand aboard, but if people want to get on to

the beach, why, there's no trouble ferrying them to the beach. You can snorkle right off the boat and see lovely fish and coral. On a couple of the beaches there are refreshment facilities, typical island bars, which are quite pleasant. There's good food, and there's plenty of variety.

If your guests want a little nightlife, there are two or three places you can go. If they want the quiet life, you can lie off an almost deserted beach overnight and get a great lonely feeling of being in the islands. It's nice after a day's sailing to finally get to a shower and get back in the cockpit and pop a cork and just feel marvelously at ease with the world."

—interviewed by David Gillis

If you'd like to sail the Caribbean, several companies can put you at the helm of a yacht or provide a crew to sail it for you. The Moorings has bases in the British Virgin Islands, St. Martin, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and Grenada; call (800) 535-7289 for a 60-page brochure. The Virgin Islands Charter yacht League, in St. Thomas, also provides yachts; call (800) 524-2061 or (809) 774-3944 for a 36-page brochure.

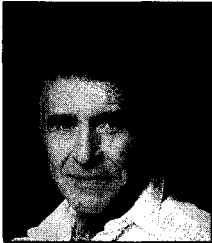


*Soper's Hole in the West End, Tortola*



## "SO MUCH TO DISCOVER"

*Ricardo Montalban fulfills his fantasies in Mexico*



Actor **RICARDO MONTALBAN** is probably best-known as Mr. Rourke on the television program *Fantasy Island* and for the title role in the movie *Star*

*Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Reared in Mexico, he now lives in California.

"MY WIFE, who's American, loves the way Mexicans use color. Color is important in every little town. They dare to use certain colors that you never see here. Really, it's inspiring it's so beautiful. There is a lot to choose from in Mexico; it's a wealth for the tourist.

I have traveled quite extensively in Mexico and I'm in love with it. There's so much to discover, there's so much culture. It's so rich I don't know where to begin, or stop. Mexico offers you all kinds of terrain, from desert to verdant, tropical, luscious green panorama. Plus an enormous amount of beaches; it's an enormous coast.

Ixtapa and Zihuatanejo, in the southern part of Mexico, northwest of Acapulco, almost double your money's worth because they are two towns that are very close together. One is a very modern resort and one is an old fishing village. They have incredible beaches and inlets—you can even have one little inlet all to yourself, there are so many. It's a little off the beaten path.

Then the interior is charming, with some very primitive villages and also very beautiful and sophisticated colonial towns. You can almost see the past; they haven't changed much. One of the loveliest is Guanajuato. I love the town because they have preserved it very clean and pure, like it was in the colonial days—they don't allow 'Drink Coca-Cola' signs. The winding, cobblestone streets, the balconies with flowers in them—it's just absolutely beautiful.

One of the streets is called Callejon del Beso. It means the 'little tiny street of the kiss,' because it's so narrow, like an alley, actually. They say that two lovers that were kept apart by their families were still able to kiss each other while sitting in the windows opposite each other. It's absolutely charming."

—interviewed by Liam J. O'Malley

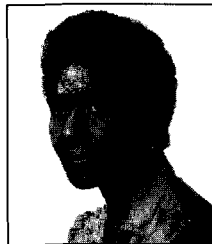


*Dancers celebrating Jon Konnu*

PETER MARTIN ASSOC.

## "SOMETHING DYNAMIC"

*Dancing in the streets with Sheila Barnett*



**SHEILA BARNETT** is a founding member of and former principal dancer with the *National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica*, for whom she now choreo-

graphs. A Kingston-based dance educator, she is also a founding member of the *Jamaica School of Dance* and specializes in traditional Caribbean forms.

"OUR TIME is the summer, but the one thing you would see in the winter in different parts of the island would be the Jon Konnu, or the local masquerades, which are done over Christmas and into the New Year.

Slaves came to Jamaica in blocks—a lot of Ashanti at one time, Congo at another—and this is reflected in the Jon Konnu. You see African retention as well as European. You see remnants of Scottish steps and the Irish jig. And there's the play within the play.

Africans use the term 'play' for a dance-music drumming event, and the Jon Konnu people usually stage a play,

like Shakespeare, within the 'play.' This has been done from the eighteenth century right through. When the procession stops, say, in a football field or the crossroads of a district, they perform. You'll find your king and queen and princesses and warriors—courtly figures—and usually that set will perform a short play.

It's dying now. Where the groups used to be very large, they now average ten to twenty. It tends to come and go with the economy. But people do keep costumes from year to year. A character might be in a family, and a father will train a son to take his part. So you have this kind of continuity.

Everything in our history has fed into Jon Konnu. Everything in it marks specific turning points or changes or an influx of people. In the beginning, nobody really intended to have a society. Some people came by force, some didn't; some had passports, some didn't. But no one escaped the influence of the other in the Creolized society. And it's that cross-fertilization, with a strong African base—which all the Caribbean shares—that has given us something dynamic."

—interviewed by Lamar B. Graham

**J**on Konnu is not the only winter festival in Jamaica. On January 6, a celebration is held to mark the Maroon guerrillas' victory over the British, more than 250 years ago, in Accompong, in the west-central region of Jamaica called the Cockpit Country.

Today's Maroons are descended from runaway slaves and freedmen who fled to the highlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their annual fête includes song and dance, Maroon drumming, and the ceremonial blowing of a horn trumpet called an *abeng*.

For more information on Jon Konnu and the Maroon festival, call or write one of the Jamaica Tourist Board offices. Offices are located in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Mexico City.

## "SUCH GORGEOUS BEACHES"

*Christopher Plummer: A midwinter Caribbean dream*



The Canadian actor **CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER** is internationally known for his works in theater, film, and television, including numerous Shakespearean

roles and as Captain von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*.

"THE MAGIC of Anguilla is that it is nearly untouched and divinely uncrowded. It felt as though my wife and I were discovering the island for the first time. Unlike some Caribbean islands, the na-



C.C. HICKOX

*Beach view from a Cap Juluca villa, on Anguilla*

tives are uncorrupted and welcoming, warm and friendly. I have traveled a lot, and I have never seen such gorgeous beaches anywhere.

I am crazy about one hotel on the island—Cap Juluca, a place that offers total isolation. There's no radio or television. It has wonderful Moorish architecture, and I think that if I had a house in the tropics that's the sort of architecture I would employ. It's very romantic, it has a kind of mystery, and it melds beautifully into the landscape.

There is still some building going on, and I hope to God that they can keep it like it is. The delightfully eccentric Ricketts [the managers] oversee everything. They make the place.

We ate most meals at Pimms; the fare is absolutely ideal for a West Indian tropical climate. The island has some wonderful off-beat restaurants.

We are going back this winter."

—interviewed by Carol Isaak Barden

**A**nguilla is the northernmost speck of the Lesser Antilles. Still a British colony, the island has some 700 guest accommodations and about forty restaurants.

Until recently, few places in the Caribbean were as little visited as remote, low-key Anguilla. Sixteen miles long, the flattish island is fringed by thirty talcum-powder beaches and remarkably clear seas, and has all the resources to become a world-class watering hole—that is, if you cherish peace and quiet. The island is without nightclubs, duty-free shops, casinos, fast-food joints, commercial excess, or even a jet runway, and has just five stoplights. Almost nothing happens at night except at a few calypso joints. Golfers, gamblers, and shoppers will be happier elsewhere.

For more information call the Anguilla Tourist Information and Reservations Office, (800) 553-4939 or (516) 261-1234.

## "A MIRACULOUS FEAT"

*Disney World puts Carol Burnett in a good humor*



Five-time Emmy Award winner **CAROL BURNETT** recently visited Walt Disney World, in Orlando, Florida, while doing a taping at Disney-MGM Studios

Theme Park for the Disney Channel.

"WALKING AROUND, I got to meet Roger Rabbit, Mickey Mouse, and Snow White. Most of the characters don't talk, in case the person who is being, say, Roger Rabbit doesn't sound like Roger Rabbit did on the screen. I guess they don't want to spoil the effect.

But Snow White could talk. She wasn't wearing one of those fake heads.

I had a nice chat with Snow White, or Snow I should call her. We are on a first-name basis. We talked about the weather.

It was June when I was there and it was hot and humid. I looked at Grumpy and he didn't look too cool. But out in front of everybody they were all just as bouncy and cheery as they are in the original movies.

I don't do those rides where you lose your stomach, but I went on other rides. The one that sticks in my memory the most was going through a tunnel at Epcot, and as you look to your left or your right you see scenes from the future. It shows what the average kitchen would look like in 100 years if technology continues to progress, and what people

would wear and how the television would be.

And it shows mannequins that look so real; when they talk, their mouths move. It's all recorded, and it's all just down to the millisecond. The kid mannequins are watching television or reading, and even their little knuckles move, which is a miraculous feat. It's kind of wonderful when you look at the technology there, to think of the minds and the talent behind all of it. I would love to be in the room when they have their think tank sometime.

When I was a kid, one of my dreams was to be a cartoonist for Walt Disney. I wish I had been exposed to Disney World as a kid; I can just imagine what my reaction would have been. Even now, I didn't blink for a while after seeing all this. My eyes were pretty big and round."

—interviewed by Fran Golden

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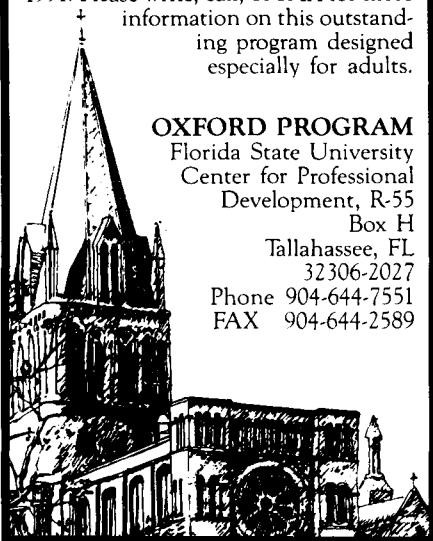
## North Carolina



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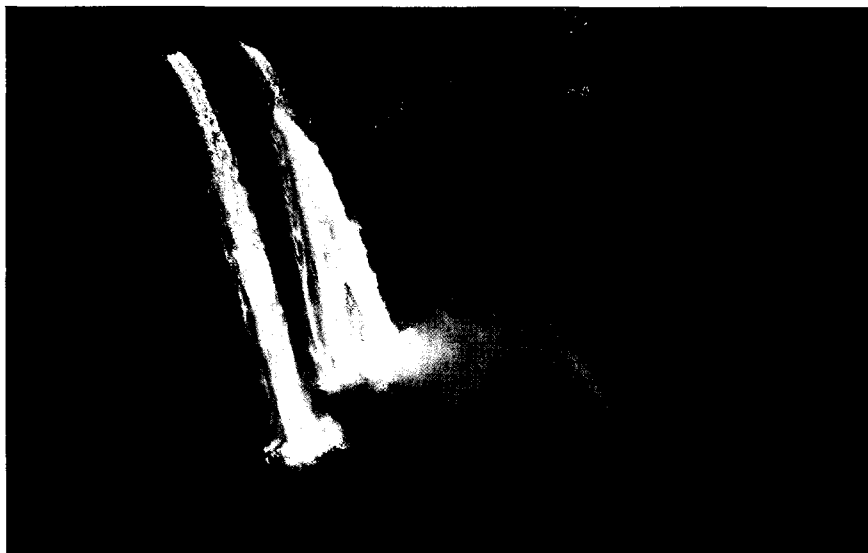
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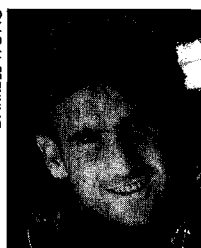
HAWAII VISITORS BUREAU

Wailua Falls, on the island of Kauai

## "SOMETHING UNIQUE TO OFFER"

*Robby Naish breezes around the Hawaiian islands*

DARRELL WONG



Once the world's youngest champion windsurfer, **ROBBY NAISH** has won more events than any other sailor in the history of the sport. Naish, who is featured in

Willy Bogner's new film, *Fire, Ice, and Dynamite*, has lived in Hawaii most of his life.

"WINTER IS usually the time I come home to Hawaii from my windsurfing expeditions. There's only a few degrees' difference in the weather here year-round, which makes it especially pleasant for visitors.

Each of the Hawaiian islands has something unique to offer people. You can go biking in Molokai, windsurfing in Kailua, or dancing in Waikiki. Try to see more than one island when you're here.

Hawaii, the largest and newest island of the chain, has the tallest mountain in the world from the ocean floor to the peak. Mauna Kea [13,796 feet above sea level] is a fairly desolate place, but you can ski there in the wintertime. People who visit there fall into a routine of skiing in the morning and going to the beach in the afternoon. It's quite good snow. There're no lifts, so a jeep takes you up a paved road to the observatory—and waits for you at the bottom. It's pretty cold up there, but people still treat it like spring skiing. You'll often see skiers coming down the mountain in shorts. Another really neat thing about

the island of Hawaii is Mauna Loa, the only active volcano on the chain.

I especially love my hometown of Kailua, on Oahu. It's a nice, quiet residential place with beautiful white-sand beaches, just far enough from the cities. Lots of families rent vacation homes near the beach; you can get them at a fairly inexpensive price. The outer islands have an uncrowded atmosphere, where there's plenty of beach space for everyone.

If you want to pick up the pace, Waikiki is just a short drive from Kailua. You've got your culture here, the opera, orchestras. There's also a great night life in Waikiki, and wonderful package deals. Most hotels are still reasonably priced. Of the one million people who live in Hawaii, about 800,000 reside on Oahu. People often get the shock of their lives when they visit Waikiki. It's not what everyone is looking for, but it can be a nice change for people staying in remote areas.

Kauai is the last and oldest of the islands. It has the rainiest point on earth, which tends to scare a lot of tourists away. The rainy spot is really just one part of the valley; the rest of the island is just beautiful—green and tropical.

One special part about the winters here are the sunsets. Hawaii doesn't have sunsets in the summer. The sun is overhead, and then suddenly it's dark. In the winter, you get a bit of dusk. The sun goes over the horizon in an arc ... and the colors last much longer."

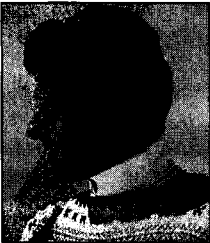
—interviewed by Jennifer Silverman

# SKIING

## "THE BEST CONDITIONS FOR THE SPORT"

*Stein Eriksen: Everything is downhill after Utah*

SCOTT NELSON



A citizen of Norway, world-champion downhill skier **STEIN ERIKSEN** has homes in Montana and in Utah, where he is director of skiing for the Deer Valley Re-

sort. He won a bronze medal at the 1950 World Championships, gold and silver medals in the giant-slalom and slalom events, respectively, at the 1952 Winter Olympics, and three gold medals at the 1954 Championships.

"I'VE SKIED all over Europe. I've skied in South America. I've skied in Japan. I think I've skied just about everywhere. When you choose skiing as a profession, you like to be where the snow and skiing are best—and Utah has the best snow and the most desirable weather. I'm not talking only about the snow that is on the ground. I'm talking about the air, the freshness, the lack of humidity. That's why I picked Utah as my final,

permanent destination and residence.

And I love it. I love it not only because of the people but because of the best conditions for the sport that I like to perform. I always test myself. I go out skiing every day. I just go out any time. We never get days when you feel, Oh, this is an impossible day. It never rains, we never get the fog, we never get the penetrating cold. You always discover something exciting about every day.

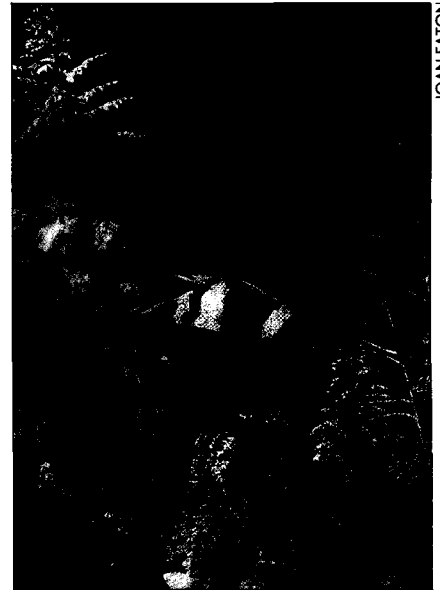
I always come back to the lodge after skiing. Everybody gathers around the fireplace or the lounge, and people just sit and talk about the day they experienced on the mountain. They want a little of that after-ski atmosphere, and it has a little romance about it all. You meet people from every part of the world, not only from the United States. This is a very important part of the excitement and romance of skiing. You're not only on the mountain satisfying your demands for skiing, but you're coming in meeting people."

—interviewed by David Gillis

PARK CITY SKI



*At the Park City Ski Area, Utah*

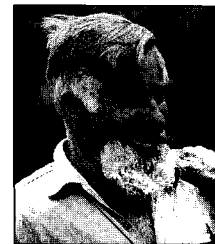


JOAN EATON

*Waterville Valley, New Hampshire*

## "LULLS, TWISTS, HIEROGLYPHICS"

*Selden Hannah on the ins and outs of New England skiing*



**SELDEN HANNAH**, seventy-eight, is considered the grand old man of New England skiing. Since 1933, when he helped his Dartmouth classmates cut Hell's

Highway, on New Hampshire's Mount Moosilauke, Hannah has designed some 300 ski areas across the country. Today he lives on a farm in Sugar Hill, New Hampshire.

"FOR AN EASY, interesting skiing experience, I think my favorite is Squaw Mountain, up in Greenville, Maine. It's so beautiful. You look over Moosehead Lake into Canada—you might see the North Pole if it's cold enough! It's uncrowded here, so you really ski with pleasure; you're not part of a moving slalom. It's all bush at Squaw, nice, rough terrain; no lights, no houses, no people, beautiful. My favorite ski trail in New Hampshire is Sel's Choice, at Waterville Valley. It has a history to it. In 1936, another fellow and I were sent to Mount Tecumseh by the Forest Service, and we laid it out, in spite of enormous erratic boulders in its path, ten, twelve feet in diameter. Sel's Choice follows the fall line, has a lot of good turns,

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plus an adequate velocity to generate good skiing. You look out at the Mount Osceola Range and Sandwich Mountain and the little town of Waterville Valley.

To make a good ski area, you need a good mountain, one that has enough downhill fall line and a lot of irregularities and interest to it. I'm not at all in favor of great wide slopes that seem like thruways. I like lulls, twists, hieroglyphics. Most ski areas today are built for mass crowds. They're all the same: wide and flat, with inclined planes easy to maintain. There are new trails at Okemo and at Cannon Mountain that just slide right down the mountain. They have no characteristics. That's the modern way. Some people go skiing like they go to the beach—they like to ski under the lift, so everyone can watch them. It's the same way, like people like to run up and down the beach; swimming's not so important, it's having other people notice you.

The more interesting ski areas, in general, lie in areas of less population. When I ski, I don't like to duck to see if anyone's running into me. That's why I like cross-country skiing. There are good trails at Gunstock and at Bretton Woods, well-maintained, well-packed, well-marked. But I like high-country skiing best; I like to bushwhack. You

really have to know what you're doing. It's very dangerous; you have to know your mountains. In the West, you can hit avalanches. It's also nice to ski along old logging roads. There are a lot of good ones in the north Maine woods. I do one near my home in Sugar Hill, following Route 302 to Crawford Notch, to Zealand Hut, to Thoreau Falls, over the old railroad grades, to the Kancamagus Highway, and back down to Route 3.

Skiing at night is fun, but it gets a bit hairy because you only have two dimensions, and you'll feel your feet drop down without knowing there's a dip or a hole. But I most like to ski in the early morning, especially after a fresh snowfall. The trees are more bizarre and the sun hits the crystals, and up higher you can see frost feathers dancing in the early sunlight, carried on the wind. It's so quiet, so contemplative."

—interviewed by Katharine Whittemore

## "PART OF THE AREA'S CULTURE"

*Cross-country skiing  
across ten countries:*

*James Standefer*



*An eye surgeon from Stillwater, Minnesota, DR. JAMES STANDEFER has participated in ten of the eleven cross-country ski races on the World-*

*loppet circuit, a series of races ranging from a forty-two-kilometer waltz through St. Moritz to a ninety-kilometer Swedish endurance test.*

"MY FIRST RACE was the American Birkebeiner. I went into it just to finish, but afterward I decided I could do better if I worked at my skiing. My wife and I had traveled a lot, but we'd always seen countries from a bus. The Worldloppet races have taken me to some places I'd never have gone otherwise and allowed me to see those countries in a different way. Everywhere there's a loppet event, skiing is part of the area's culture. They prepare for the race all year. For the Italian race there are thousands of people watching; when you ski into the villages, there's wine and pizza. Scandinavia's more stoic. In Norway it's casual, businesslike. But in Finland you finish in a stadium and they put your name on a giant electronic scoreboard. The Swedish course is physically challenging; when I did that one it was thirty below zero. The Canadian race is about what you'd expect—all steep and narrow trails between trees. If they tried that kind of track in this country, they'd be sued. The German race is romantic; you ski through the backyards of castles.

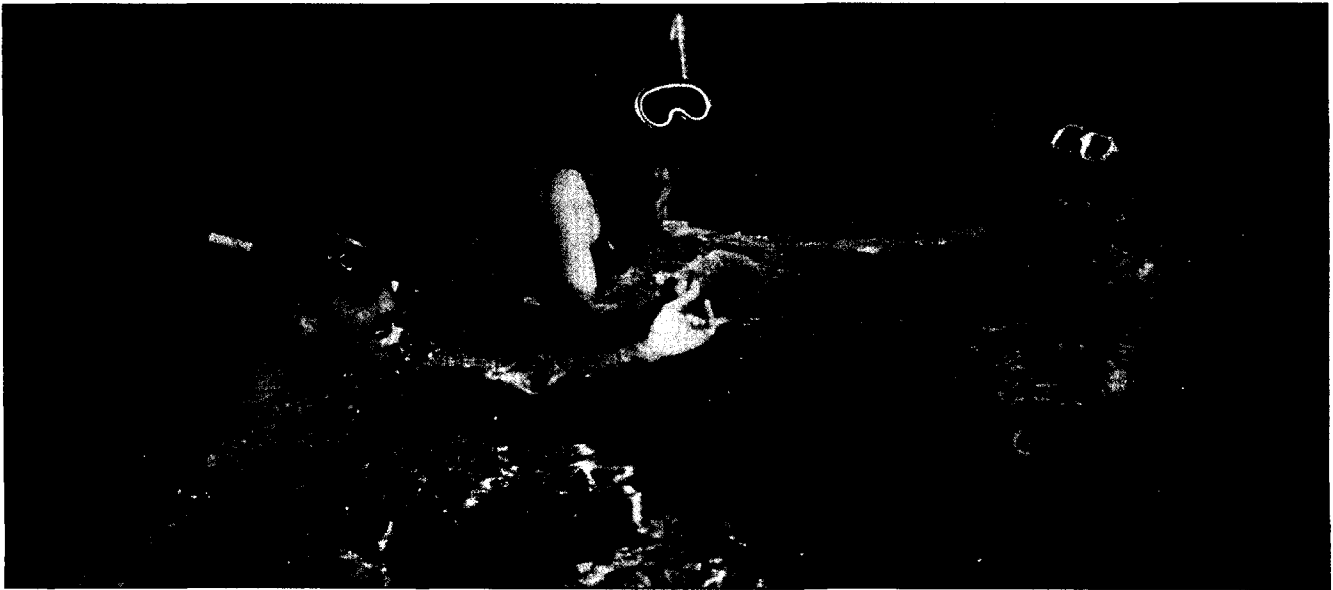
For most of the races, you arrive in a big city, then make your way to some remote area for the starting line. Making that transition has taught me more about the countries where I've raced than I'd ever learned as a sightseer."

—interviewed by Clif Garboden

**W**orldloppet (pronounced LO-pet) cross-country races are open to all skiers, though elite racers may submit times for starting position. The 1991 circuit begins in Austria on January 20 and finishes in Norway on March 17. This season's American Birkebeiner, from Hayward to Cable, Wisconsin, will be run February 23. Entrance fees average about \$45. Detailed information, brochures, and applications for all Worldloppet events are available from the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, Box 911, Hayward, WI 54843; (715) 634-5025.



# EXPLORING



AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

Snorkelers on the Great Barrier Reef

## "FEEL THE INVIGORATION"

*Ross Terrill studies the effects of paradise*



**ROSS TERRILL** is affiliated with Harvard University's John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. Born, raised, and educated in the state of

Victoria, Australia, Terrill is now a U.S. citizen, but he goes down under regularly and has written about his native land, including the book *The Australians*.

"NORTH QUEENSLAND is a discovery. It's a tropical paradise. Nature dominates Australia, but up there it's not nature as a threat, it's nature as a bond. The people are laconic without the sort of bitterness of the harsh outback.

The town I love is Cooktown, where [British explorer] James Cook came ashore to mend his boat—he was wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef. Here in Cooktown you've got sort of a quirky nature, with its soft tropical face meeting the Great Barrier Reef, all set in the innocence of a country town. It's full of history, and it's a part of Australia where

the aboriginals are very numerous.

It's a lovely place. You can go fishing. You can go on a catamaran, and you get fried by the sun, and then you come back and eat a coral trout, a very fleshy, flavorful fish. The Great Barrier Reef is only fifteen miles away. You can get into a glass-bottomed boat, or better still you can go snorkeling or scuba diving. You

see that jungle of fish. Society is relatively harmonious compared with the predatory world down there. When you come up you feel almost grateful for being in human society.

The mornings are lovely, and after sundown the people gather in the little pubs and on the verandas, and that's a great time for talking. You feel the invigoration of a life lived close to nature, and of a people who are affected by that, who fit in with nature, who've been sort of swept and softened by it."

—interviewed by David Gillis

**T**raveling to Cooktown, on Queensland's Cape York Peninsula, can be an adventure in itself. Cooktown is reached most easily via Cairns, some 150 miles to the south, to which both Qantas and Continental have direct flights from the United States. You may fly Sunbird Airlines from there to Cooktown, or skim the waters of the Coral Sea aboard the *Quicksilver*, a "wavepiercer" boat that makes the trip in about two and a half hours. Or you can take a bus, rent a four-wheel-drive vehicle in order to take on the tough coast road, or rent a regular car and follow the tamer inland route.

The intrepid traveler is well rewarded for the effort: Cooktown is very close to the Great Barrier Reef, with tropical rain forests that give way to golden beaches, and much aboriginal culture and early Australian history to take in—not to mention swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, and fishing for black marlin.

For more information, call the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation at (213) 465-8418 or (800) 333-6050.

KENYA TOURIST OFFICE



A giraffe at the Tsavo National Park, in Kenya

## "SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SURPRISED"

*Richard Leakey digs Kenya*

UPI/BETTMAN



**RICHARD LEAKEY** is a noted paleoanthropologist who was born and raised in Kenya. He is director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, in Nairobi. Leakey was

previously director of the National Museums of Kenya for twenty-two years and remains its chairman. He also retains active involvement in anthropological research at Lake Turkana.

"KENYA IS a country that I enjoy enormously, but what I find very strange and very special about it is that virtually everybody from any country that comes here very quickly falls in love with Kenya as well. And that's very unusual.

Knowing that mankind arose here, I often wonder whether our genes don't have some sort of memory about where they came from. It's more than just the beauty. It's more than just the sky, it's more than just the smells. It's more than just the wildlife, it's more than just the people. It's obviously a combination of that. But it must be something deeper than that, because people from such diverse backgrounds and such a range of experiences invariably say, 'There's a country I want to go back to.'

I suppose I don't have an answer why. I don't necessarily as a scientist believe in such a thing as genetic memory, but it's almost as if there is a genetic memory

and people who come here feel that they've come back to where they belong.

The country seems to leave a much more indelible mark on people's minds than other places. It's such a diverse country and there are so many opportunities to be surprised. Any journey in Kenya will take you through such a diversity of habitats. The country changes; in thirty miles of travel you're into a new zone, new habitat, new sense. You need to get out and go to the parks and the wildlife areas; take journeys that turn on your recognition of the phenomenon, which I don't even have a name for.

I love the desert in the north. It's very dry and it's a very big scene. It's hard to describe the size. It's sort of a big 'scape. You can almost see beyond the curve of the sphere.

The best times of day in the desert, because it's hot, hot, hot, are really early morning and late evening. There's quite a quick dawn and a quick sunset, but the change of colors thrust into light and the sunsets are always magical."

—interviewed by Fran Golden



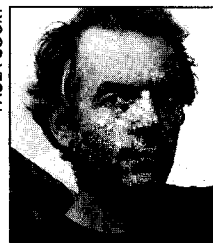
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## "OUT OF THE ORDINARY"

*Flying to India and Thailand with Spalding Gray*

PAULA COURT



**SPALDING GRAY** is a writer and performer who has created a series of thirteen monologues, which have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. He is best known for his monologue *Swimming to Cambodia*, which became a critically acclaimed feature film by Jonathan Demme. He has recently completed a novel, *Impossible Vacation*, to be published by Knopf, and will be touring with his latest monologue, *Monster in a Box*.

"I WENT TO India for the first time in 1976, and it blew my mind. We were traveling in trains and staying in people's homes. Calcutta was for me the most interesting city. It's a place for eccentrics, a huge sprawling contradiction. We went down to the Ganges, to where they burn the corpses. I watched from quite a distance, because for me it was just too overwhelming.

The most interesting trip for me was to Ladakh. We rented a jeep in Kashmir and drove for four days along this road with two- or three-thousand-foot drops and no guardrails. So you're driving in the Himalayas, up, up, up, until you get to the capital of Ladakh, which is very close to Tibet. It's called Little Tibet because it was annexed. The Ladakh people are the sweetest people I've ever met. A lot of it has to do with the fact that there is no prostitution, no movie theaters, and no drugs. They are Tibetan Buddhists. The very earnest seekers go there to see the Tibetan temples. The trip back was very beautiful because we passed through all four seasons: melting snow, rushing streams, spring flowers. Everything seemed out of the ordinary in India.

I went to Thailand in 1984 to play a





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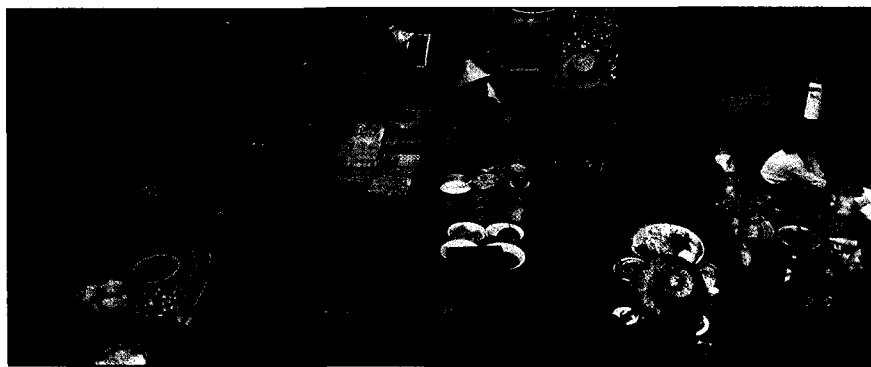
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small role in the film *The Killing Fields*. At first we were trapped in Bangkok because all the opening scenes were taking place there. It was close to monsoon season, so it was the wrong time to be there. One thing we did that was very nice was tour the canals. It's very interesting to see how the people live on the boats, with the kids jumping in the water, and the way they use the whole river. It's open, and nice to get out in the city and get some fresh air. The most important thing after you've seen the canals and the Golden Buddha is to get out of town and go either north or south.

I flew north to Chiang Mai, which is one of the prettiest hill stations in the mountains. You can rent a Land Rover and a guide and visit one of the tribal villages. Our guide was well educated about the tribes, so it wasn't a tourist show. She took us to a working village where the women do all the work and the men smoke opium. They live in these huge communal houses, with a big central fire, very primitive, with the smoke going up the center. Chiang Mai was a good experience, and it was an easy flight up, only an hour or so.



TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

Spice-laden boats on a canal in Bangkok

I also took a trip south to Phuket, which is extremely beautiful and very primitive. There were still thatched huts along the beaches, and the surf was wild. I remember one evening sitting at dinner on the edge of the ocean, and there were no boats or tourists, and we were saying this won't last for long. I've heard that it's still beautiful, but more developed since I was there.

What was most unexpected about Thailand was the beauty of the people. I was devastated by it; it was almost painful. I was completely taken in by them.

There is a passivity to the people of Thailand that is very Swisslike. Their languid lifestyle is amazing and no one is overweight. This is because of the diet, which is wonderful. One of the most interesting places we ate was a supermarket where you selected all the stuff you wanted, vegetables, fish, bottle of wine, in a shopping cart, and they took it behind the scenes and prepared it for you. You sat by an artificial waterfall, and they served it to you in no time at all. Things were not expensive."

—interviewed by Dan O'Kane

## "PERMANENT HETEROGENEITY"

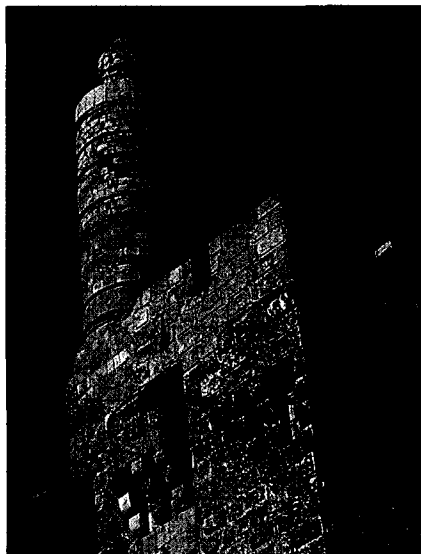
*Teddy Kollek pursues consensus on Jerusalem*



**TEDDY KOLLEK** has been the elected mayor of Jerusalem since 1965. He is also the author of several books on that city, including the recent *My Jerusalem*.

"I AM BUSY trying to do something that is very difficult to achieve: trying to ease tensions due to the permanent heterogeneity in Jerusalem. We have Jews here from ninety-two different countries, close to forty different Christian denominations—some have been here 2,000 years, the Armenians have been here 1,500 years—and the Moslem Arabs. Nationalism and separatism are very strong motivations.

If you're living in Jerusalem you are aware of the tensions, but you don't really feel them, and a tourist wouldn't even notice that they exist. In 1989 we had eleven homicides: six connected between Jews and Arabs, and five purely criminal. It's a gruesome theme—but not a terrible, frightening number. We



ISRAEL MINISTRY OF TOURISM

The Citadel, in Jerusalem

do feel a bit of the Arab uprising—strikes, shops are closed—but Jerusalem is a very livable city. We have theater, music, a good symphony orchestra. In November we'll be celebrating Isaac Stern's seventy-year birthday with a spe-

cial series of concerts—some with him, some with [Mstislav] Rostropovich.

We recently completed restoring David's Tower—the Citadel, a great ancient tower. All the halls of the Citadel are filled with the periods of Jerusalem's history—Canaanite times, Babylonian, the Crusades, Ottoman, the early Jewish settlers. They're all represented using modern means—various plays of light, computer sketches. It's an original way of showing the history of Jerusalem.

In the winter, we have a fairly good climate—we have a bit of rain, and we are very happy over it—but if you travel from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea you won't have any rain. There are several Christmases, based on different calendars. The Gregorian calendar has the standard December 25 Christmas, the Greek Orthodox Christmas is on January 7, and the Armenians celebrate it a week later. If you are interested in Israel because of religion, you will find an interesting time there during the holidays.

The times of day I like best in Jerusalem are the sunrise and the sun setting. All our houses in Jerusalem are built or faced with a natural Jerusalem stone, a kind of limestone. It is yellowish, a little pinkish, and the city is particularly beautiful then."

—interviewed by Lisë Stern

# CRUISING

## CRUISE-SHIP CHEFS NAME THEIR FAVORITE WINTERTIME PORTS

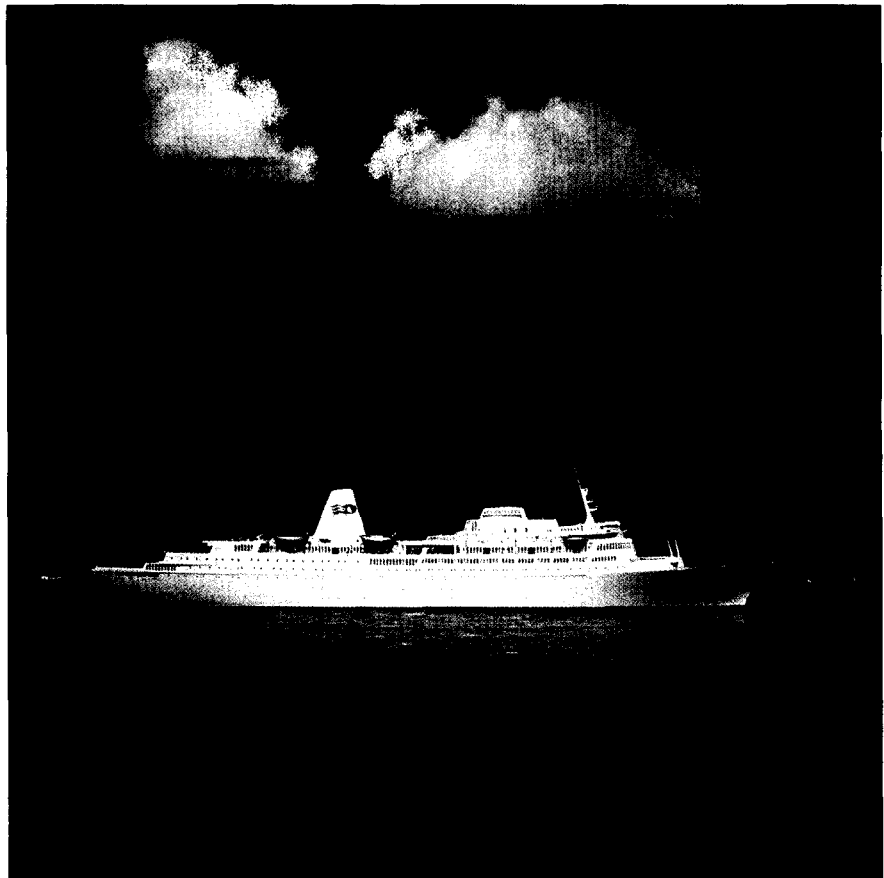
### The South Pacific

**OMAR SILINGARDI**, manager of hotel services, food, and food services for Princess Cruises, has been with the line seventeen years. He began as a busboy, fresh from his native Modena, Italy. The Princess fleet's winter itinerary includes cruises to Canada, Mexico, South America, the South Pacific, and the Caribbean.

"THE SOUTH PACIFIC ports are probably my favorite because you don't have many ships down there. There, more than any other place, can really take you back to the islands. Pago Pago [in Fiji], Bora Bora, Papeete [on Tahiti], and Noumea [in New Caledonia] are really different. You go to local restaurants and you don't find 300 American tourists. Down there it's still possible to find the local places. The food is plain, but everything is so fresh; it is all from right there. They still cook wonderful French recipes, the old ones, now forgotten in France. And they do roots, potatoes, and strange vegetables that are native there; they steam, bake, and cook them in the oven. Another thing they do well is a fish chowder, like the *cioppino* in San Francisco, or the *cacciucco alla livornese* in Italy. The places down in the South Pacific are incredible. Two of the best for fish are New Zealand and Australia. Heaven for seafood lovers; absolutely!"

### San Francisco

**DANIEL DURAND**, food and beverage director for Royal Viking Cruise Line, is a native of Valence, in France's Rhone Valley. He was introduced to Royal Viking while a chef instructor at the Culinary Academy, in San Francisco. After being invited on several cruises as a guest chef, he came on board Royal Viking as a corporate chef in 1985. This winter Royal Viking Line offers cruises to Hawaii and the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, India, Africa, the Caribbean, South and Central America,



Princess Cruises' Sea Princess in Bora Bora

Mexico, Canada, and New England.

"SPEAKING ON BEHALF of all the four chefs I have, I would say that we have a few favorite restaurants in San Francisco. We know many chefs there. We know Hubert Keller at the Fleur de Lys; he's been a guest of mine, as a guest chef on board our ship. I like the simplicity of his food, and he always prepares us a dish which is very popular for the French, with a new style. We love to go to Stars, because of Jeremiah Tower. And we go to La Folie, which is again another chef I've invited many times on our ship, Roland Passot. In fact, right now he's on board our Royal Viking Star in New York, doing a cooking demonstration. He cooks typical classic-French cuisine, and it's nice to be able to go back to a restaurant and eat like we used to."

### St. Martin

**FRANK SCHMIDT**, executive chef of Norwegian Cruise Line's Norway, received his training in his native West Germany and has cooked on ships all over the world. Typically he spends at least six months a year cooking on board. This winter NCL offers cruises in the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Mexico, and off the coast of California.

"MY FAVORITE port is St. Martin, in the Lesser Antilles. The Dutch and the French sides—they have a mixture of French and West Indian food; that's very good, no? There are two excellent restaurants in Philipsburg: the West Indian Tavern, which has fresh seafood, and Les Escargots, which does traditional French mixed with a little nouvelle cuisine."

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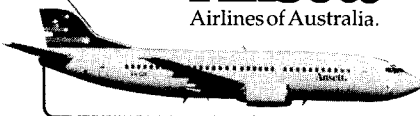
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## New York

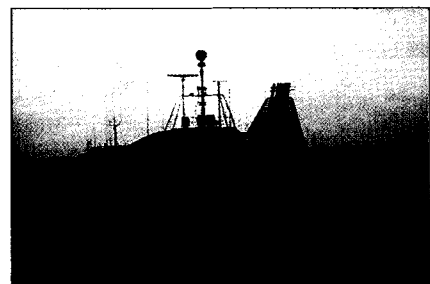
**MICHEL ROUX**, culinary consultant to *Celebrity Cruises*, has been cooking for the past thirty years and is among Britain's best-known French chefs and restaurateurs. Along with his brother, Albert, Roux owns and operates the only restaurants in the British Isles to be awarded three Michelin stars: *Le Gavroche*, in London, and the *Waterside Inn*, in Bray. Roux, who hails from Charolles—the beef area of France—has been consultant to *Celebrity Cruises* since its inception, a year ago. This winter *Celebrity* ships are cruising to Bermuda and the Caribbean.

"I DO LIKE New York; we seem to have a lot of products available there, especially in the fish market, which is superb. I have been there four or five times, and each time I go there you've got more varieties of fish than anywhere. I go to a little restaurant, a small place, not very well known in the fish market; they do, I think you call it, chow soup, the chowder, clam chowder, yes. It's a small place on the first floor and it's wonderful; they do all kinds of fish from the market which they just got there. It's a lovely place. But I must be honest, my connection to the restaurant world, I've got more than a few thousand names in my mind and I can't recall them all. But that is a lovely bistro in New York, and when I go to the fish market I always go there. Some of my favorite restaurants are in New York, too; I've got *Le Cirque*, *La Grenouille*, *Lutèce*, and the *Four Seasons* for lunch."

## Antigua

**RUDOLF SODAMIN**, the *Cunard Line's* senior food manager and corporate chef, recently published *The Cruise Ship Cookbook: Elegant Meals With Cunard*. Before his arrival at Cunard, in 1984, he was a chef at New York's *Waldorf-Astoria* and *Plaza Hotels*. This winter *Cunard* ships are cruising around the globe to (among many other places) the Caribbean, the Orient, the Canary Islands, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

"I LIKE THE Caribbean the most. One of my favorite islands is Antigua. There's a restaurant there called the *Galley Bay*; it's right on the beach, not too far from the harbor where we anchor the *Sea Goddess*. The cuisine is very native Antiguan; actually it's Indian, with a bit of Indian-Dutch, very good. I always go there when I get a chance, and I eat their lobster salad. It's quite difficult for me to



Cunard's Sea Goddess I

get away, because all our passengers come back for lunch and dinner, so if you go on this Caribbean island, you have to know this island like I do or like one of these people who travels a lot. You need to know where the restaurants are ahead of time, in case you go ashore."

## Puerto Rico

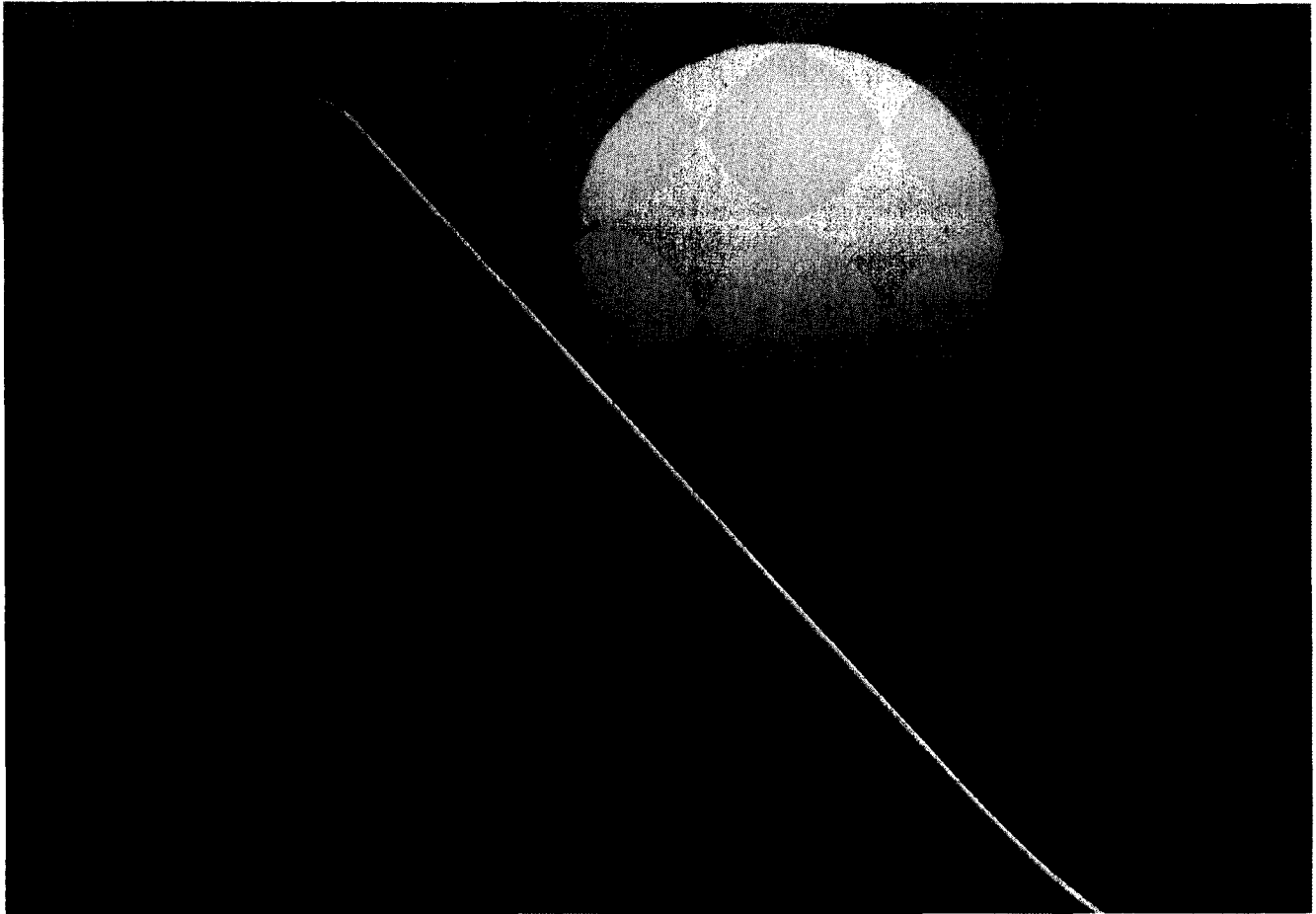
**EMIL GRAF**, director of food operations for *Royal Caribbean Cruise Line*, began his culinary career at age eighteen, in his native Zurich, Switzerland. He spent twenty-three years working for *Hilton International* and came on board *RCCL* in 1981. He spends the majority of his time designing menus and overseeing food operations on *RCCL's* nine ships, which this winter will be cruising to the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Alaska, Baja and the Mexican Riviera, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

"I WAS CHIEF chef of the Caribbean Hilton in San Juan for sixteen years, so I am very familiar with the cuisine there. Each week we would have folkloric-native nights, so I learned how to prepare the native food. I can do the suckling pig, with special dishes like *alcapurias*, which are green bananas filled with ground meat, like a small egg or a *gnocchi*, that you rest overnight before frying, and you fry them half-frozen, to keep them a yellow color. I do *bacalaito frito*, which is very famous down there—ladies cook them on the beach. You make like *crêpe* dough, and you fill it with codfish, and you fry it like a patty, like a corn fritter with fish inside instead of corn. I cook chicken with rice, and native *chayotes*, which are roots hanging on a tree, like tropical pears. You peel them, and inside is a little stone, and then you cook them like boiled potatoes. I put them in salads, or mash them with crabmeat. All these dishes are good, but remember, the hunger is the best appetite."

—interviewed by Alessandra Bianchi



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## Computers



### IBM Van Winkle

*What's worth buying from the past four years of personal-computer advances*

by James Fallows

**I**N A COURTYARD outside the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, I once saw a foreign-service officer sunning himself at lunchtime, eating a sandwich while leafing through a glossy brochure. The brochure was a technical-specifications manual for a new car the man was planning to buy when he was sent back home—the downsized Lincoln Continental, as I recall. He would look intently at the numbers on one page, flip to the next to admire the side-view photo of the car, and then go back to the numbers, just in case any of them had changed.

The man's determination to buy a Continental, rather than a Lexus or a BMW, may have been his own idiosyncratic reaction against years of frustration as a trade negotiator. But his loving study of the brochure reflected a more universal impulse. Half the joy of materialism lies in the anticipation. Once you stop dreaming about a new

possession and actually possess it, the "is that all there is?" *tristesse* often sets in. Otherwise, children would enjoy Christmas afternoon as much as Christmas Eve. By the same reasoning, the more remote the moment of possession, the more wonderful the dreams can be. During a monsoon downpour in Rangoon, when the gutters ran so deep in sewage that I thought it best to stay indoors, I lay on my cot in the decrepit Strand Hotel, thumbing through an American computer magazine and thinking how great it would be when I could finally get a truly high-speed hard disk drive.

I don't know whether the diplomat ever bought his car, but after returning from Asia I loaded up on the computer equipment I had been reading about and coveting from afar. In a way it was an advantage to see the results of several years' worth of changes in the computer market all at once. The ma-

for computer magazines, which have become increasingly boosterish, had heralded each month's new product or program as if it made everything that came before obsolete. When I left the United States, early in 1986, I was embarrassed not to be taking with me a computer based on the "exciting" Intel 80286 central processing chip. By the time I got back, the 80286 had become the bell-bottom pants of the computer business, and it was embarrassing to have ever taken it seriously.

The first thing that was obvious on re-entering the computer world was that some important parts of it still haven't improved enough. Grammar-checking programs, for instance, are still largely worthless. CD-ROM ("compact disk—read only memory") technology was being touted five years ago as the revolutionary innovation that would make vast quantities of data, from whole encyclopedias to census



files, instantly available on your desk. It's being touted the same way now but remains too slow, clumsy, and expensive to be of real use. Lap-top computers are constantly getting smaller and lighter, but so far every model has at least one obvious imperfection—the batteries don't last long enough, the machine is too heavy, the screen is hard to read. Even the Compaq LTE, overall the best model so far, has an awkwardly laid out and shrunken keyboard. And, to disclose my major bias, the Macintosh is still not as fast and as flexible for writing as IBM PC-compatible computers, which is why I'm talking only about the IBM half of the computer market in this article.

In many other areas technology has obviously hit a plateau. Today's major word-processing and data-base programs can perform many tricks their ancestors couldn't. The newest release of WordPerfect, for instance, can print the Hebrew, Russian, and Japanese alphabets, among others, as well as the Roman alphabet in countless fonts. I love to impress my Japanese friends this way, and I like using the new tools WordPerfect makes available, although I know that it and most other best-selling programs are bulked-out, steroided, but still-recognizable versions of their previous selves.

**I**N SEVERAL FIELDS, though, computer technology really has progressed in ways that matter to the average user. One early step that made personal computers dramatically more convenient to use was the change from data storage on floppy disks (or the nightmarishly slow and unreliable tape cassettes that preceded them) to storage on hard disk drives. Several developments of the late 1980s are equally important.

The first of these advances, the 386 computer, may seem an odd choice for mention, since it is often described and promoted in ways that should make users wary. The original IBM personal computer and its many clones were based on the Intel 8088 central processing chip. They were followed, in the mid-1980s, by IBM AT-style computers, with the 80286 chip; then by "386 computers," based on the 80386, which caught on about three years ago; and within the past year by computers containing the new 80486 chip. Most advertisements and reviews

make it sound as if the main difference among these chips were their raw processing speed. The old 8088 ran at 4.77 megahertz (million cycles per second); the 80286's speed was pushed to 8 and 12 megahertz and beyond; and today's 386s are usually offered in 20-, 25-, and 33-megahertz versions.

Raw speed is the least important of the 386's virtues. It's always nice to have a computer that snaps through its functions a little faster, but for most people the practical difference between "slow" and "fast" machines is slight. In word-processing work, for instance, even slow computers spend most of their time scanning the keyboard to see if you've gotten around to hitting another key. Processing speed matters more in other areas, especially any work involving graphics (manipulating images is a much more complicated task for a computer than manipulating alphabetic characters). If what you want is speed for architecture-type graphics or heavy calculations, it would be sensible simply to buy a co-processing chip.

What the 386 offers is something much more important than speed. It represents another big step toward making a computer function more or less in tandem with the way a person does.

This part of the 386's appeal is usually described with two unfortunate pieces of computer jargon: "memory management" and "multi-tasking." "Memory management" refers to the 386's ability to divide up computer memory into discrete chunks, and act as if each of them were a computer on its own. The idea behind "multi-tasking" is to let a computer do several jobs at once—send a message through a modem, draw a graph, calculate a spreadsheet, and check the spelling in a document. In practice there are only a few times when you really want to multi-task—for instance, if you have a very long document to print but would like to work on something else while the printer is churning away. But the real virtue of the 386 is what could be called "multi-availability": being able to switch among half a dozen functions almost instantly, much as you would at an ordinary desk when you pick up the phone book or jot down a note while leafing through the paper.

Most pre-386 computers forced you to do exactly one thing at a time. If you

were working on a chart but wanted to check a report you'd written the previous week, you had to save and unload one program, load another, and then go back the same way. Now, by pushing one or two keys on the 386, you can switch instantly from writing something to changing an appointment to marking down an expense to finding a phone number.

**M**AKING FULL USE of the 386 requires one practical and one philosophical choice. The practical choice concerns what kind of machine to buy. Completely new 386 computers range in cost from about \$2,000 for the SX model (which is offered in 16- and 20-megahertz versions) to about \$10,000 for a fully loaded system that runs at 33 megahertz. Every component of the new machines, from disk drives to memory boards, has been designed with the 386's capacities in mind, so naturally a wholly new computer offers the best performance. But you can also give an existing computer a brain transplant, by installing an accelerator board, like an Intel Inboard 386. This board, which fits into an expansion slot on IBM-compatible computers, replaces the existing 8088 or 80286 chip with a 80386, transforming the computer into a 386. An Inboard machine won't run quite as quickly as a new machine, but it can save money for those who do not want to replace their PCs. (An Inboard 386 with one megabyte of memory costs from \$500 to about \$800, depending on the computer.)

The philosophical choice concerns the software you use to make your familiar programs available all at once. Month after month computer experts debate whether OS/2, the IBM operating system of the future, will or will not supplant the DOS system, which has been around for almost a decade now, or whether the latest version of Microsoft's Windows program will fully exploit the 386's abilities and sweep both DOS and OS/2 away. This is very much like arguing whether the B-2 Stealth bomber or the Trident D-5 missile would be a better replacement for the lock on your front door. Both OS/2 and Windows are relatively expensive, slow, cumbersome systems that don't really work yet. Meanwhile, a few cheap, streamlined, but effective programs can already do what Micro-

**The most important tip you'll ever need for perfect cappuccino.**



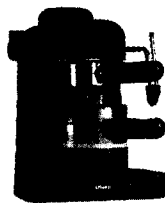
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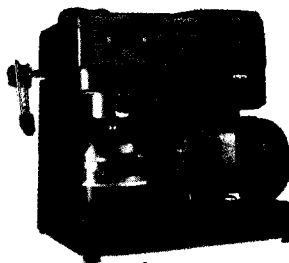
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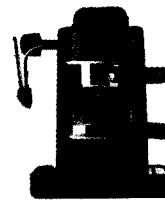
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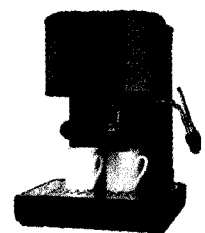
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CafePresso



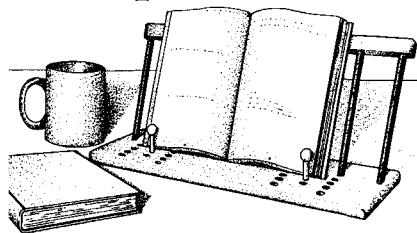
Espresso Mini



Espresso Novo

Krups offers Espresso/Cappuccino makers ranging from \$80 to \$350 at fine department and specialty stores. Robert Krups, North America, Closter, N J 07624

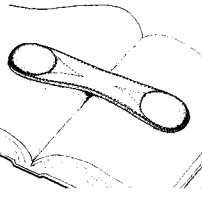
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soft and IBM say they'll do someday.

The best is DESQview-386, from a company called Quarterdeck, in Santa Monica. For about \$200, including a superb memory-management utility called QEMM, DESQview-386 equips you to have six or more programs simultaneously available, and to run several of the programs at once. A cheaper version of DESQview-386 works on non-386 machines, but won't work as well.

DESQview has only two defects that I've noticed in six months of constant use. Its parent company is either deliberately surly or woefully understaffed: it was almost impossible to get a response to my questions, by phone or mail. And DESQview is incompatible with another superb breakthrough program called UltraVision. This program, which costs about \$120 and is produced by the Personics Corporation, of Maynard, Massachusetts, does one thing that sounds impressive and something else that really counts. The impressive trick is to put about twice as many characters on the screen as is usual, by shrinking each character; this is amusing but quickly drives you toward blindness.

The truly valuable achievement is to give you complete control of the colors on the screen—and, more important, to make the characters on color monitors look as precise and clear as those on monochrome displays. Monochrome screens, with their green or amber letters on a black background, are fundamentally less pleasant than high-quality color monitors. But the letters on a color screen are inherently blurrier and harder to read. (Each dot on a monochrome screen is either lit or dark, which gives characters a very sharp edge, whereas each "dot" on a color screen is actually a combination of three dots—red, blue, and green—so the edges can never be as sharp.) UltraVision largely offsets this problem by replacing the on-screen characters with a selection of clearly defined, easy-to-look-at fonts. About half the time, I use DESQview and sacrifice UltraVision. The rest of the time, I switch to two multi-availability systems that are slightly less flexible than DESQview but work with UltraVision: the WordPerfect Office system, from the mighty WordPerfect Corporation, and Software Carousel, from SoftLogic Solutions, Inc.

Another program I admire and rely

on is Magellan, from Lotus Development. Lotus is of course rich and famous because of 1-2-3, the spreadsheet program that every businessman either has or wants to buy. The excitement about 1-2-3 has always been a mystery to me. The very first spreadsheet program, VisiCalc, was a brilliant innovation, compared with which 1-2-3 represented an incremental improvement and buffing-up. As VisiCalc did, Magellan offers a radically new idea that seems obvious once someone has pointed it out. The program was written for Lotus by a team of programmers led by the brothers Bill and Larry Gross, who first conceived it.

Magellan addresses a problem that a previous computer improvement—the coming of huge-capacity hard disk drives—unexpectedly caused. The disks fill up with information very quickly, and with their subdirectories and their cryptic file names it becomes very hard to know what is where. The more programs you use, the more formats your information is stored in, and the greater the odds are against finding it when you need it.

The previous approaches to keeping track of data have all had severe limitations. For instance, I used to keep indexes of textual material—interview notes, correspondence, phone lists—with a powerful filing program, like ZyINDEX. But before I could use the programs to find data, I had to put all the material into the proper format and then index it, which I never got around to doing. The genius of Magellan is that it avoids all drudge-work steps. It contains a series of "viewers," which let you look at the content of any file, whether it was created with WordStar, 1-2-3, XyWrite, Paradox, or any of a dozen other programs. Magellan also contains an unbelievably fast and powerful indexing system, which requires virtually no upkeep, planning, or alteration from the way you'd ordinarily do your work. To give a real-life example, I remembered this morning that I had once interviewed someone in Osaka, and I wanted to find his phone number now. I typed in his name, and in less than five seconds Magellan had pulled up the notes I took when meeting him three years ago.

Don't bother reading the spec sheets anymore. Get Magellan—and a 386 system, and one of the multi-availability programs. □





## Espresso at Home

*The right beans and the right equipment can make anyone a barista*

by Corby Kummer

THE ESPRESSO at the Tazza d'Oro, in Rome, is probably the best in a city that drinks it day and night. The bar, just behind the Pantheon, has long been a mecca for those who love espresso so thick, so creamy, and so strong that it is nearly edible.

A customer is engulfed by the powerful smell of coffee when he enters the sprawling bar, with its big burlap sacks of beans waiting to be roasted. People crowd the cash register to pay for their coffee before ordering it, and then, receipts in hand, cross the room,

feeling the steam of the giant espresso machine and coming closer to that powerful scent. The barman, or *barista*, begins by switching on a coffee grinder. Beans swirl down from a glass hopper into the grinder, and the ground coffee rains into a glass cylinder. The *barista* flicks a lever to dispense ground coffee into a gleaming metal cup fitted with a spout below, and tamps it. He latches the metal cup into the espresso machine, takes a coffee cup from the many that have been heating on a wire rack set over the machine and places it beneath the metal

one, and presses a button. A thick black stream trickles from the spout.

This ritual unites all the *baristas* in Italy. But not everyone accomplishes the layer of light-colored *crema*, or foam, that is the pride of an expert espresso-maker and a given at the Tazza d'Oro. The *crema* is not the high, steaming white milk froth that makes an espresso a cappuccino (probably named for the brown Capuchin monk's habit topped by a cowl), the form in

which most Americans prefer to drink espresso.

This *crema* isn't milk at all, and is shallow. But its very presence shows that the water has come

through hot and fast and right.

Why does Italian coffee seem so much richer and more flavorful than American? Does being a superb *barista* require a fine Italian hand, or can anyone produce a great cup of espresso with the right coffee beans and equipment? And does a great cup of cappuccino require a graduate degree?

THE FIRST DECISION in making espresso is which coffee to buy. No one kind of bean is required or even traditional, and espresso can be made with any roast. Because the process emphasizes the acids in coffee, a relatively low-acid dark roast is typical. It is very difficult for a roaster who is committed to using only arabica beans, the superior kind, to duplicate a European-tasting espresso, because with few exceptions (Illy Caffè, the best large-scale roaster in Italy, is one) Europeans use robusta beans, for body; robusta beans are also naturally lower in acid, but they don't have good flavor. Italians are considered the master espresso roasters. Others have trouble getting the hang of it. "If you roast too dark, you get the burn, that extra-bitter taste," says George Howell, of the Coffee Connection, a specialty coffee roaster in Boston. "I'm after a slight bitterness at the beginning, with a sweet, chocolate aftertaste. It's miraculous to achieve."

Two Italians who achieve that live in America—in Seattle, in fact, the coffee capital of America. The men, Umberto Bizzarri, at Torrefazione Italia (800-827-2333), and Mauro Cipolla, at Caffè Mauro (206-762-4381), roast much bet-

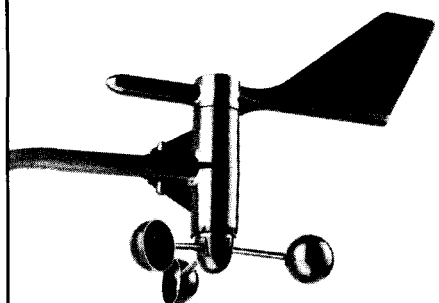
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ter beans than one usually finds in Italy. Both have tried to persuade their clients to accept lighter roasts than what has become standard here, since the flavor of their beans is good enough not to need masking, and both have been obliged to offer much darker roasts than they would prefer. The roasts I like are their medium ones: Perugia from Torrefazione Italia and Espresso Roma from Caffè Mauro. These coffees taste wonderfully rich and deep without being the least bit burned or bitter. You won't need to add sugar to them, as the Italians almost always have to do.

Starbuck's, the leading roaster and the leading operator of coffee bars in Seattle, has devoted much time to its espresso blends. I find them too dark, but at a recent tasting at the company's spiffy new headquarters, a sort of shrine to coffee, I was knocked out by an espresso made with Ethiopian Yrgacheffe, which is not normally used for espresso. Its typical floral notes, surprisingly, came through, and the flavor was powerfully concentrated.

Roasting coffee over wood is still part of coffee mystique in Italy. Modern roasters scoff at the idea that a wood fire could alter flavor, saying that the slower roast that results from a wood fire is in fact baking, not true roasting, and it lowers acidity without developing full flavor. Even so, I happen to like espresso made with the two wood-roasted coffees I have found available in America: Udinese Caffè, roasted over beech wood by Piero Busolini at his small family business in the elegant northern Italian city of Udine (you can find out where to buy it by calling 901-362-1593), and Mr. Espresso, roasted over oak by Carlo Di Ruocco, an Italian transplanted to Oakland, California, from Salerno, near Naples, where many small roasters still use wood fires (415-287-5200).

All these roasters offer decaffeinated blends. It's not true, though, that espresso has more caffeine than other kinds of coffee. You use less coffee for a two-ounce cup of

espresso than for a six-ounce cup of filtered coffee, the standard measurement; most people drink one cup of espresso at a time but a good deal more than six ounces of filtered coffee at a time. Because caffeine is easily soluble, some people say that you get all the caffeine no matter what brewing method you use. Others say that the period of contact between coffee and water is also important in caffeine extraction, which would mean that per ounce espresso would have less caffeine than filtered coffee. The kind of beans you start with matters most—arabica beans have about half the caffeine of robusta.

Whatever coffee you buy, if you buy it in the bean—as you should if you want to taste it at its freshest—you face the problem of grinding. The right grind is more important in espresso than in any other kind of coffee, because the grind must create the right amount of resistance to the water under pressure; it determines whether the espresso will taste watery and sour (too coarse) or bitter and sour (too fine) or whether it is richly flavored and comes out with *crema*. A burr grinder is essential to produce the right grind—as fine as sand or table salt but not a powder, which would gum up the machine and not let any water through. Burr grinders are unfortunately much more expensive than the propeller-blade kind. The one I recommended in a previous article, the Jericho, is so expensive (more than \$200) that many readers upbraided me. Krups makes a burr grinder that sells for about \$80, and the Italian company Rancilio one for about \$135 (you can find out where to order it from the Chicago importer

Xcell, at 312-644-7756). If you want to take the easy route and buy ground canned coffee, try Illy Caffè (telephone 800-872-4559 to find out where it is sold near you). The espresso you make will demonstrate how crucial grind size is.

Illy will supply a seven-gram scoop with its coffee on request. The right amount of coffee is as important as the right grind, and seven grams is slightly



less than the two tablespoons in an American coffee scoop. Most people, both at home and in restaurants, use too much, figuring that espresso is supposed to be strong, after all.

**C**OFFEE-BREWING leaves the range of easily comprehensible technology when it comes to espresso. The underlying principle is simple. Pressure forces hot water at about 192°F—not steam, which would scald the coffee—through ground coffee to produce a syrupy, powerful, smooth dark brew. Espresso has much heavier body than brewed coffee because the pressure forces the water to travel through the grounds themselves instead of dripping through the spaces between the particles. The oils in the ground beans emulsify with the water instead of hanging in a colloidal suspension, which is what produces the seeming slick on the surface of brewed coffee.

According to Ian Bersten, an Australian coffee merchant and historian who has just written a history of coffee, the first patent on a machine using the principle of forcing water through coffee was given to a German, in 1818. English and French inventors, too, soon took out patents; Bersten goes along with the idea that *espresso*, an Italian word, is taken from the French *express*, in the sense of “made for you alone” (rather than the sense of “made quickly”). But after the turn of the century the Italians claimed espresso as their own—their name stuck too—and they began producing the fantastic contraptions sprouting wings and spigots and spouts which are still on display in some coffee bars.

The Italians have held their lead in technology and design. I avidly leaf through *Bar Giornale*, a glossy monthly trade publication, less for the useful information on food and restaurants than for the sumptuous pictures of new espresso machines, which are photographed as if they were sports cars. They’re about as sleekly designed and powerful, too. If home machines were that powerful, it would be much easier to make espresso, but cost and space

requirements rule out very powerful machines. New technology in home espresso machines has boomed in the past two years, as the market has grown from \$30 million in 1987 to \$56 million last year. Prices vary tremendously, and before you consider buying a fancy machine, you should think about what you really want to drink.

People not brought up on quick



stops at a coffee bar for a businesslike gulp may not appreciate the brevity of an espresso, which can seem like a big cheat—one thimbleful after all that trouble. It makes little sense to spend a lot of money on an electric pump machine, which makes the best espresso, and try to brew more than the tiny shot of coffee it is designed to produce. Trying to brew more than a two-ounce cup at a time will result in overextracted coffee, weak and sourish. Better to buy a stovetop steam machine, generically called a *moka* in Italy and ubiquitous in Italian kitchens, which makes thinner and weaker but not overextracted coffee, and more of it at a time (you can buy whatever size pot is convenient). Any steam machine produces richer and denser coffee than the usual American filter or drip machine does, and a *moka* is so cheap—depending on size, from \$10 to \$40, whereas good pump machines start at \$250—that it’s a fine first step on the way to real espresso.

In steam machines water heats in a chamber, either on the stove or electrically, and when enough steam pressure has built up the water is forced through the ground coffee. You have to brew a full pot at a time in most machines, since you can’t turn the steam pressure on and off. The most commonly available *moka* has a wasp waist that unscrews, revealing a lower compartment for water, a perforated basket for coffee which goes in the middle, and an up-

per pot in which the brewed coffee emerges. As soon as the first coffee spurts into the top, like brown lava (you can hear it, or leave the hinged cover open and watch for it) the heat source should be turned very low. Otherwise the water in the lower chamber will boil (enough pressure builds up to brew the coffee before the water comes to a full boil) and the coffee will taste bitter; the bottom of the pot might burn too. Other stovetop machines, such as the Atomic and the Vesuviana, both of which look like biomorphic relics of the late-fifties *dolce vita*, work on the same principle.

So do moderately priced electric espresso machines, whose only advantage is that they include a milk steamer for making cappuccino—but the steamer is usually much too weak to make decent foam. An electric steam machine is what most people who balk at spending \$300 for an espresso machine settle on. But to my mind, it’s a waste of \$60 to \$100, since you can find better and cheaper ways to foam milk, and the coffee is no better than what you can make in a *moka*.

**T**RUE ESPRESSO has that elusive *crema*, and the only way to obtain it is with a piston or pump machine. Steam machines, stovetop and electric, achieve a pressure of four to six atmospheres; filter and drip machines, which rely on gravity alone, achieve less than one. A piston or pump machine brews at about nine atmospheres.

The old top-of-the-line home espresso machine, the Pavoni, looks impressive and old-fashioned with its gleaming chrome or brass. It uses a piston; steam builds up in a chamber, and you force water through the coffee by pressing a big lever that activates the piston. (Piston machines gave rise to the expression “pull an espresso.”) A Pavoni is more expensive than many pump machines—these days one costs at least \$400—and not nearly so easy to work.

Pump machines are modern in design, and with their array of switches they look as if they’d make perfect espresso at the push of a button. In



You deserve a factual look at...

## Iraq, the Arabs, the U.S., and Israel Is there linkage between Kuwait and the "West Bank"?

Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and its designs on Saudi Arabia have startled the world. When asked to relinquish his conquest, President Saddam Hussein said that he would consider doing so, provided that Israel would withdraw from the administered territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and from the Gaza strip. Is that a proposal that should be considered? Would such linkage be conducive to the welfare of the United States and the rest of the world?

### What are the facts?

■ Some believe that the strategic value of Israel had been diminished in the wake of the "luke-warming" of the cold war with the Soviet Union. The aggression by Iraq against Kuwait and its threatening posture against Saudi Arabia show the fallacy of such thinking. The U.S. has committed (so far) over 100,000 personnel and untold military assets in the area. Saudi Arabia having purchased close to \$100 billion of the world's most advanced weaponry, has been found to be totally impotent, even before the first lunge of the Iraqi aggressor and has asked for the protection of the United States. Kuwait, overrun in less than 24 hours by a small contingent of the Iraqi military, also had acquired tens of billions of dollars of sophisticated armament. All of it was "liberated" by the Iraqis. The most sensitive military secrets fell into enemy hands.

■ In order not to "offend" the Arabs, the United States Administration has asked Israel to "lie low" in this present conflict. Though highly classified and politically sensitive intelligence is provided by Israel to the U.S., Israel is indeed on the sidelines. It will in all likelihood remain in that posture unless it finds its own security threatened. And, that could very easily come about, because Hussein, feeling cornered, may attempt an attack on Israel. He would do that in the quite justified expectation that those Arab states that are now "allied" with the United States would promptly switch their allegiance. Because even though the Arabs hate each other, they are all united in their greater hatred of the Jews.

■ The U.S. carries most of the financial and military burden of the Middle East action. The Administration has decided that it is politically advisable to involve the Arab nations in this enterprise. We thus find ourselves with

such unpleasant associates as, for example, Syria. Its president, Hafez Assad, though the mortal enemy of Saddam Hussein, is equally unsavory. He has slaughtered his own citizens by the tens of thousands, he is a terrorist leader specializing in killing Americans (remember PanAm 103?), and he knows the use and value of hostages. All these Arab countries are likely to ask for a "reward" for their "cooperation" with the United States. And, the world already knows what "reward" will be expected: More pressure on Israel to yield Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip for a Palestinian independent state.

■ It is estimated that the cost of this present conflict is on the order of \$50 million per day during the non-shooting stage. The cost is estimated to escalate to \$1 billion per day if open hostilities break out. It is well to keep these figures in mind when discussing military aid to Israel. At present, Israel gets \$1.2 billion per year in U.S. economic aid, almost all of which is repaid to the United States as service on debt. Israel also gets \$1.8 billion per year in military assistance. Virtually every penny of it is spent in the United States. Compared to the cost of the present Mid-East operation, compared to the \$130 billion spent each year on the defense of Europe, and compared to the \$30 billion spent yearly in Japan/Korea, the contribution to Israel is a defense bargain. And there is an additional "bonus": Over 300,000 American soldiers are stationed with NATO, over 30,000 in the Far East, and close to 100,000 by now in Saudi Arabia. But there is not a single American soldier stationed in Israel and none will be requested. If and when the crunch comes, Israel will know how to inflict intolerable damage to Iraq or to any other enemy of the Judeo-Christian civilization, of which Israel is the only defender in that part of the world.

Israel is America's only reliable ally in the Middle East. Its undiminished strength and ability are of greatest political and military importance to the U.S.. Nothing must be done to diminish Israel's military potential. Yielding the "West Bank" to the hostile "Palestinians", Saddam Hussein's fanatic supporters, would be a suicidal move for Israel and a military catastrophe for the United States. One hundred retired U.S. generals and admirals are agreed that Israel must retain the Jordan River as its defense border. Those who consider Saddam Hussein's preposterous proposition that, in exchange for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, Israel should withdraw from the "West Bank" do not understand the political and military realities of the Middle East.

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fact, expensive as they are, they require a good deal of time, skill, and maintenance to operate successfully. A pump machine can be scary—when you press the switch to make coffee the machine rumbles so alarmingly that you may think it is about to explode. (Salton pump espresso machines come with stickers that say "I'M NOISY! IT'S OK, I'M JUST DOING MY JOB.")

Home pump machines use one of two systems to heat water: boiler or thermal block. In either system the main switch activates the heating element and the brew switch turns on the pump. Water under pressure comes out a screen, called a shower head, and travels through the ground coffee, which is in a basket in a metal filter holder that latches onto the machine. The espresso drips out holes or spouts at the bottom of the filter holder, ideally in lazy, fat brown rivulets.

Boiler machines are far more common than thermal-block machines. The sturdiest boiler machine I have tried is made by Rancilio. A man who repairs espresso machines told me a few years ago that it was the best-built home machine, and I searched one out. (The Rancilio Rialto has recently come into wide distribution, for about \$400; you can find out where to buy it by calling Xcell, at 312-644-7756.) For more than a year I used it every day, and was well pleased by its solidity and reliability and the layer of *crema* it produced—at least, I was when I remembered to preheat the filter holder by running hot water through it empty, a helpful step with any machine. (Cups should be heated too.)

In America thermal-block machines are marketed by the Swiss company Rotel and, on a much larger scale, by Krups. Instead of a boiler a thermal-block machine has a flat radiator-like heating coil with a tiny channel for water. When you turn on the brew switch, the pump forces a small amount of water through the coils and then through the ground coffee.

When filling the filter basket in any machine, it's important not to compact the ground coffee too much, or the water won't come through; the idea is less to pack than to level the top gently. Don't use the round plastic tamper that comes with most espresso machines—the convex surface guarantees uneven extraction. Look for a cup or a juice glass with a flat bottom. Many people

overfill the basket, and struggle to latch the filter holder onto the machine. Leave generous head room.

IF ALL THIS scrutinizing grind size and filling and tamping sounds wearing, there are two easy ways out, the first of greater interest to the adventurous and the second a godsend to those in search of push-button espresso.

The Cappuccino Express machine, by the Italian company Spidem, is a normal pump machine with a boiler, and not nearly so solid as the Rancilio. But it features a great new invention—a filter holder with a valve of its own.

After you press the brew button, you keep the valve closed for a few seconds, allowing pressure to build to a higher degree than in other machines—ten to twelve atmospheres—and the grounds to be saturated. (You can saturate the grounds in any pump machine, a good idea, by quickly turning the pump on and off before brewing.) As you open the valve, the coffee is forced through a needle-sized opening before coursing down the spouts. The Spidem machine makes the thickest and richest espresso of any home machine I have tried, with a head of *crema* as high and lightly effervescent as one could wish. If I were an expert at grinding and tamping and keeping everything hot, I could probably come close to these results using other machines, but that valve makes things simple. The Cappuccino Express is in limited distribution; it costs about \$325, and you can order it by calling 408-429-1920 (you might have to wait several months for delivery).

Illy Caffè has developed a “pod” system of ground coffee in teabag-like packets, and has entered into an arrangement with Krups to market a thermal-block pump machine, called L'Espresso Plus, that uses the packets. The idea is old. Ernesto Illy, the innovative president of the company, says that the first patent for the idea was granted in Italy in 1922. But perfecting the method seemed beyond most manufacturers, and almost beyond his company, which did not market packets

until ten years ago, and then did so only to restaurants. (Today other companies are marketing “coffee bags” for steeping and for brewing in microwave ovens.)

You make sacrifices with the Illy packets and the Krups machine. If you use the packets, you give up the fun of finding your own blend and roast. If you don't, and use your own coffee in the normal filter basket that Krups provides, the *crema* is unimpressive and the texture of the coffee thin.

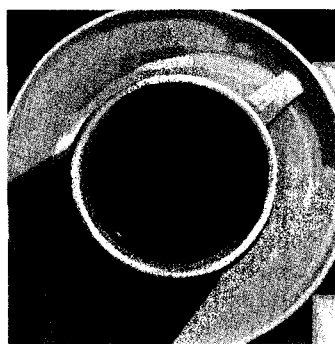
But the system is the only foolproof one I know, and even if the packets turn an exhibition sport into one anyone can play, they will encourage the

everyday use of an expensive machine (L'Espresso Plus sells for about \$350; you can call 800-526-5377 to find out where). The machine even comes with a video on how to make espresso and cappuccino. Most important, the packet espresso is very good, with a presentable layer

of *crema* and a thick texture. It has impressed several of my Italian guests.

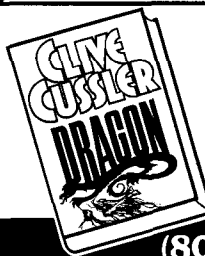
A HEAD OF WHITE foam turns espresso into a celebratory drink. Italians order cappuccino only for breakfast or as a midmorning snack—ordering cappuccino after noon is a sure sign that you're a foreigner—and often with a *cornetto*, which looks like a croissant but isn't flaky. But in America cappuccino is more popular than espresso, even after dinner. The formula for cappuccino is two thirds hot milk to one third coffee, with a generous cap of foam. *Caffè macchiato* is “stained” with two teaspoons or so of foam poured onto the surface, leaving a ring of coffee on the perimeter of the cup; *caffè latte* is mostly hot milk (no foam, classically).

Steaming isn't easy. I took lessons recently from David Schomer, a young man who runs two espresso carts in Seattle called Espresso Vivace, and who is extremely serious about proper espresso and cappuccino technique. He explained that the goal of steaming is a combination of warm milk and smooth foam—neither loose, bubbly foam that will soon deflate nor tight, dry foam that's no fun to drink.



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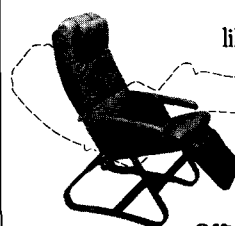
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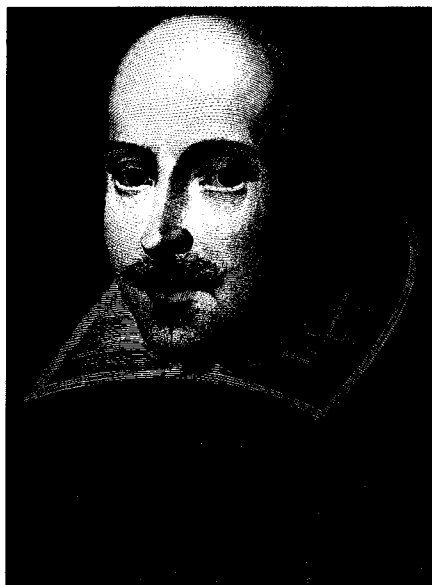
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Schomer told me the ground rules. Start with a cold, preferably metal, narrow pitcher about a third filled with cold milk. Some people say that skim milk foams better than whole milk; others swear by whole milk. I don't find that it makes any difference. (Steam won't foam cream.) Hold the pitcher under the tube on the espresso machine so that the nozzle is just below the surface of the milk, which will allow the steam shooting out to mix with air and create foam. As the foam rises in the pitcher, continually lower the pitcher so that the nozzle is always just below the surface of the foam, like the propeller of a speedboat. Schomer made me practice with my hand holding the bottom of the pitcher—if it's too hot to hold, the milk will have an off, cooked taste. I wound up with a very red palm.

At home I took refuge with some of the devices Italians have been using for several years to mix air with steam and milk. These help overcome the limitations of home machines, which run out of steam after a minute or so (except thermal-block machines, which pump steam). Stovetop steamers cost about \$30 to \$40 and have more staying power than boiler machines; you can order one from the Coffee Connection, at 800-284-5282. Krups offers with all its espresso machines an attachment called "Perfect Froth," which draws air into the steam and frees you from worry about where to place the nozzle. It fits over the nozzle and looks like a little periscope. You can buy the attachment separately to put on other steamers; Sur La Table, in Seattle at 800-243-0852, sells it for about \$7.

All these steamers and attachments, though, are in some way difficult or disappointing. The first electric home steamer that is worth paying money for has just come on the market from Salton, whose subsidiary Maxim is selling it with a slightly different design. Working with it is the closest I've come to achieving professional results. Salton's Café Cappuccino and Maxim's Cappuccino Pronto! are plain sisters, squat cylinders of beige plastic. They steam milk—or soup, or sauces, or even eggs, in a dish of fat-free scrambled eggs that the instructional video can't resist calling "eggspresso"—and they do it extremely well. With these machines you can follow Schomer's

rules. Both will retail for about \$70; you can find out where to buy them at 800-233-9054.

Or you can flout the rules by choosing a battery-operated whip. I first heard about the Moca Crema, one such device, from Tim O'Connor, a merchant in California who imports the Spidem machine. He told me that he takes it on camping trips to make his morning cappuccino. The little gadget arrived looking something like a flimsy, hand-held milk-shake machine. I doubted it could do anything of note, even on a camping trip. But it produces dense foam, provided the container is narrow and the milk is cold. It works so fast that you have to be careful to stop whipping before the milk turns to foam as dry as stiff egg whites.

The problem is that it doesn't heat milk; steam alters proteins in milk and produces a taste quite different from that of cold milk. But the Moca Crema is effective and cheap (it costs about \$15 and is available from Illy Caffè) and easy to use. You can heat the foamed milk in a microwave oven, which won't deflate it, or gently on the stove, which will if you're not careful.

**C**OCOA POWDER is seldom seen in Italian bars, and cinnamon is an unknown embellishment. On a cappuccino there's just beautifully creamy foam.

But could someone please tell me where the custom of serving espresso with a sliver of lemon peel came from? Not from the Italians, who regard this practice as a repugnant American aberration. Coffee aficionados despise it, because the acidity in the peel's oil ruins the balance of the acidity in the coffee. Tony May, the owner of San Domenico, a New York restaurant, and an authority on Italian food, theorizes that Italian-Americans used lemon peel to jazz up espresso when they couldn't afford the anise-flavored liqueur that is traditional, or maybe during Prohibition; a bottle of liqueur is still plunked on the table with espresso after a dinner in southern Italy. As far as I know, the mystery remains unsolved. Coffee in most bars in Italy is still offered "corrected" with a few drops of anisette. Lemon peel is anything but a correction. Good espresso is so rich that it needs no enrichment. □



# Books

## Gentleman Warrior

by David M. Kennedy

THE COLONEL:  
THE LIFE AND WARS OF  
HENRY STIMSON, 1867-1950  
by Godfrey Hodgson.  
Knopf, \$24.95.

**M**OST AMERICANS alive today were born after the Second World War. Many have only the dimmest sense of that conflict as a turning point in modern history. One presumes that relatively few of them have heard of Henry Stimson. Godfrey Hodgson concedes as much by opening this biography with a labored anecdote about the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, an episode presumably more familiar to today's readers than the arcana of the Second World War. At the height of the Cold War's most dangerous Soviet-American confrontation, Hodgson writes, President Kennedy's special assistant for national security, McGeorge Bundy, asked the former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett for advice. Lovett told Bundy to approach the problem "as Colonel Stimson would." Who was Colonel Stimson, Hodgson asks rhetorically, by way of introducing (awkwardly) his subject, that his ghost still guided men's decisions more than a decade after his death? The answer is a long one.

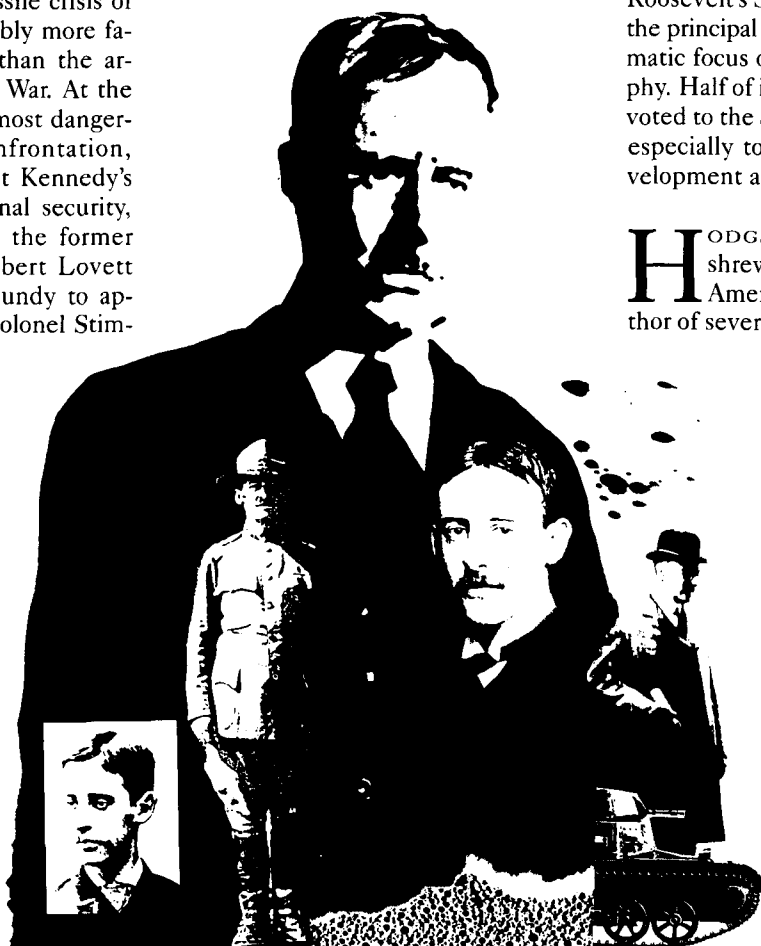
As Secretary of War from 1940 to 1945, Stimson helped to build the prodigious American military machine that ground to ghastly victory in the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Stimson's wartime duty crowned an extraordinarily lengthy

career in public service. Theodore Roosevelt introduced him to political office in 1906, with an appointment as U.S. attorney for the southern district of New York. He served his first stint as Secretary of War in William Howard Taft's Administration, from 1911 to 1913. He earned his military title, in which he forever after took inordinate pride, as a fifty-one-year-old volunteer commander of an artillery unit in the First World War. Calvin Coolidge sent him on a special diplomatic mission to Nicaragua in 1927, and soon thereafter named him governor-general of the Philippines. From 1929 to 1933 he was Herbert Hoover's Secretary of State. Despite—or because of—his faithful service to three Republican Presidents, the Democrat Franklin Roosevelt tapped him in 1940 for the biggest assignment of his life: head of the War Department in history's most destruc-

tive contest of arms. At the war's end Stimson was nearly seventy-eight, an old man closely stalked by death as he witnessed the dawn of the atomic era.

Born in 1867, in the turbulence after the Civil War, Stimson survived until 1950, his final days spent sadly watching the Cold War congeal. His experience of American warfare, Hodgson says, "stretched from Indian battles to atomic attack." No other American policy-maker "spanned in a single career so drastic a transformation of the United States's position in the world." Hodgson concludes, somewhat extravagantly, that Stimson "was the link that connects the foreign policy of late nineteenth-century American imperialism to the foreign policy of the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy eras; the link between Theodore Roosevelt and Dean Acheson." But for all the copious arc of his career, it is Stimson as Roosevelt's Secretary of War that forms the principal subject matter and the dramatic focus of this appreciative biography. Half of its nearly 400 pages are devoted to the Second World War years—especially to Stimson's role in the development and use of the atom bomb.

**H**ODGSON IS AN uncommonly shrewd British commentator on American politics, and the author of several perceptive books on the American presidency, notably *All Things to All Men: The False Promise of the Modern American Presidency* (1980). He has spent his professional lifetime explaining America to his countrymen and enlightening Americans with an outsider's fresh perspectives. Sometimes those dual objectives burden his account of Stimson's life, as he trails off into long excursions on midwestern isolationism, ostensibly for the benefit of British readers, or on the rituals of the Inns of Court, for



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benighted Americans. Indeed, the first half of the book is so encumbered by the bulky impedimenta of historical background on a variety of subjects, from the founding of Andover Academy to Nicaraguan politics to post-First World War international debts, that Stimson himself is reduced to episodic cameo appearances. But with the outbreak of the Second World War, Stimson moves close to the center of the bare, grim stage of our era's most awful tragedy.

Stimson in life inspired legendarily ferocious devotion among his associates, especially the younger men whom he favored with his patronage, from Robert Lovett and John McCloy, his assistant secretaries during the Second World War, to Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, whom Stimson had hired as a young government attorney. He has continued to cast a similar spell on his biographers. Until now they have consisted largely of officially authorized writers of safely congenial social backgrounds and political outlooks. They include McGeorge Bundy, whose father worked for Stimson and who assisted in the preparation of Stimson's memoirs, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (1947), and Elting E. Morison, whose *Turmoil and Tradition* (1960), commissioned by Bundy on behalf of the Stimson estate, remains, for all its reverential tone, the authoritative biography.

Hodgson is the first Stimson biographer from outside this familial circle, but he has not substantially revised their affectionate portrait of Stimson. Though he manages to be more critical than Bundy or Morison, he too has come under the influence of the colonel's impressive mystique. He calls Stimson the American Churchill, likens him to Napoleon's Minister of War, and ends by counting him one of Plato's "great guardians of the Republic."

Yet a reader of cynical bent—a British reader, perhaps, immune to American filio piety, skeptical of this worshipful deference, and having to hand a richer stock of literary models for comparison than his American counterpart—might see moving through Hodgson's pages not the heroic Colonel Stimson, inspirer of men, but the ponderous person of Colonel Blimp. Like this fabled British type, likably stuffed-shirted, eternally honorable, and doomed to obsolescence, Stimson

was an irreproachably correct Victorian of impeccable credentials, whose fate it was to endure—values and manners and habits of mind essentially intact—into the mid-twentieth century. All he lacked to make the comparison complete was Blimp's aura of laughable ineffectuality. Colonel Stimson at crucial moments at the dawn of the atomic age was in fact ineffectual; but there was little that was risible in his impotence.

**B**ORN TO WEALTH, educated at Andover, Yale College, and Harvard Law School, Stimson easily assumed his place in what passed for the American aristocracy in the late Gilded Age. High-minded, patriotic, enamored of the martial virtues, he uncritically endorsed his country's imperial mission and dutifully assumed his role in advancing it. His mind was sound, swift, and deep, but always conventional. He thought in the categories learned from the copybook maxims of his youth, to which he added a few trademark axioms of his own. Hodgson nicely describes them as his "seigneurial aphorisms": "Gentlemen do not read each other's mail" is how Stimson explained his rationale for disbanding an American espionage unit in 1931; and, perhaps most famous, "The only way you can make a man trustworthy is to trust him," which was offered as his logic for sharing nuclear information with Joseph Stalin in 1945.

Stimson's personal life was a model of upper-middle-class propriety. He belonged to all the right clubs: Skull and Bones, of course, as a Yale undergraduate; and later St. Hubert's at Ausable, in the Adirondacks; the Metropolitan Club, in Washington; the Century Association, in New York. His social world was inhabited exclusively by clubbable men. His relations with women, including his wife, Mabel, were excruciatingly proper. The Stimsons did not entertain divorced persons, perhaps scarcely knew any. Stimson counted several Jews, like Frankfurter, among his closest friends, but he also fell naturally into the kind of casual, unreflective anti-Semitism and racial stereotyping that flecked the speech of his class and generation on both sides of the Atlantic.

All his life Stimson displayed a bluff insensitivity to the yearnings of decidedly unclubbable men who rudely sub-

ordinated his cherished values of civility and decorum to their aching ambitions—men like the Nicaraguan guerrilla Augusto Sandino, whom Stimson snubbed in 1927 while favoring the silky politician Anastasio Somoza, and Benito Mussolini, and even Adolf Hitler. Hodgson notes in all these encounters a “lack of imagination” on Stimson’s part “that can sometimes be more dangerous than any miscalculation.” He finds the explanation for that lack in the very marrow of Stimson’s character. “It was hard for a man of his probity and rationality, not to mention his Victorian upbringing,” Hodgson writes, “to comprehend the sheer enormity, the unredeemed blackness,” of the Nazi regime that was coming to power in Germany in the early 1930s.

Stimson’s probity was his hallmark. Like the mythical Blimp’s, his probity consisted, in the Victorian manner, of a moral gyroscope, finely tuned and set to perpetual spinning in his earliest youth. While that sensitive instrument hummed on punctiliously throughout his life, the surrounding world seemed

ineluctably to progress with the passage of time, gradually robbing Stimson of a reliable compass with which to navigate the awful seas of the twentieth century. Yet in the estimate of more worldly and perhaps less scrupulous men, the obsolescence of Stimson’s imposing reputation for probity did not detract from its tangible market value. It was twice purchased on the feverish exchange of presidential electoral politics. The transactions themselves might have sullied the name of any lesser man than Stimson, whose disinterested love of country and dutiful willingness to respond to the call to service were beyond questioning.

William Howard Taft brought Stimson into his Cabinet in 1911 as a buffer against an expected challenge at the 1912 Republican nominating convention from Theodore Roosevelt’s progressive reformers, in whose ranks Stimson had previously been counted. TR responded by cutting Stimson out of his inner circle for three years.

Twenty-nine years later the scene was essentially repeated. FDR named

Stimson to his Cabinet as a means of protecting himself against Republican isolationists in the presidential campaign of 1940. Hodgson plays down Roosevelt’s manipulateness, insisting that FDR was primarily pursuing a “high road” strategy of bipartisan national unity in a time of crisis. But Roosevelt’s action was more politically calculating than Hodgson allows. Since assuming the presidency FDR had sought ways to effect a major political realignment, perhaps resulting even in a new political party. In the early days of the New Deal, preoccupied with recovery from the Depression and with social reform, he had courted progressive Republicans like Hiram Johnson and George Norris; he had offered the secretaryship of the Department of the Interior to Johnson and seriously considered Norris for the Department of Agriculture. But by 1940 Roosevelt’s priorities, and the world’s, had shifted. Not domestic reform but foreign policy now dominated the agenda, and most of the old progressive Republican reformers had shown themselves to be

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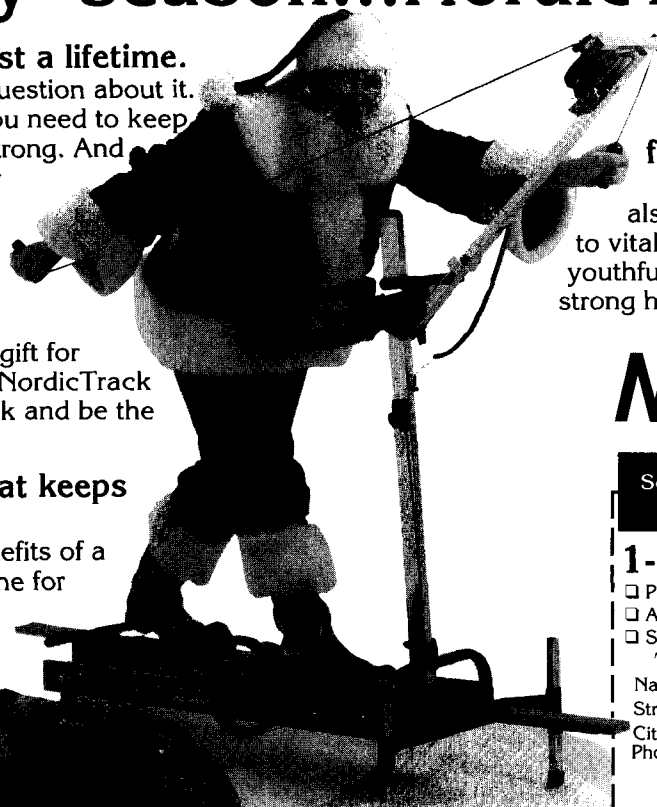
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---

diehard isolationists. Accordingly, Roosevelt pursued a new basis for his long-sought political realignment, one that would splinter off the internationalist wing of the Republican Party, regardless of its domestic conservatism. It was on this basis that Roosevelt reportedly later tried to explore the formal joint launching of a new party with the internationally minded Republican who had been his opponent in 1940, Wendell Willkie.

**H**ENRY STIMSON, among the most prominent Republican internationalists when he was summoned again to the War Department in 1940, certainly fitted that sort of Rooseveltian political design, but once in office he got short shrift from his President. By prior agreement much of the day-to-day administration of the department was left to his young and vigorous assistant secretaries Lovett, McCloy, and Robert P. Patterson. Stimson's place in the chain of command was seriously eroded when Roosevelt agreed to chief of staff George C. Marshall's request to have direct access to the President. The record does not speak forcefully about Stimson's substantive contributions to wartime strategy. Hodgson calls him, with considerable exaggeration, "the man who . . . saved OVERLORD"—the cross-Channel invasion of Normandy that took place on D-Day, June 6, 1944. But the fact is that Stimson had long argued in vain for an earlier invasion, only to yield to Roosevelt's acquiescence when Churchill insisted on peripheral actions in North Africa and Italy. Similarly, in the three-month interim between the German and Japanese surrenders in 1945 Stimson was excluded from the official party at the Big Three meeting at Potsdam, and could not impose his view that preserving the institution of Emperor should be guaranteed in the final Potsdam Proclamation calling on Japan to capitulate.

For much of the war, in fact, the elderly Stimson pursued the life of a retired gentleman. His workday ended no later than 4:00 P.M., and he found time nearly every afternoon for riding, swimming, golfing, or playing deck tennis. He spent long weekends at his Long Island estate, Highhold. William C. Bullitt tactlessly asked him in 1942 how it felt to be a "mere housekeeper of the War Department."

It is true that Stimson enjoyed some policy successes, including his role in scotching the "Morgenthau Plan," which envisioned drastic punishment, including forced pastoralization, for postwar Germany. ("When you punish your dog," Stimson said, "you don't keep souring on him all day after the punishment is over.") And Stimson's reputation for honesty and integrity was conspicuously useful in preventing Congress from asking questions about the billions of dollars requested in appropriations for the atom-bomb project. ("It's part of a very important secret development," Stimson told an inquiring Senator Harry S. Truman on June 17, 1943. An overawed Truman replied, "I herewith see the situation, Mr. Secretary, and you won't have to say another word to me. Whenever you say that to me, that's all I want to hear.") But Hodgson is obliged to acknowledge that Roosevelt for the most part kept his Secretary of War in an "anomalous and in some respects even humiliating position."

The old colonel had one last growl in him yet, however. He was at the very center of that small group of people who had comprehensive knowledge of the war's darkest secret, the Anglo-American project to develop an atom bomb. Work on the bomb had begun in 1939, even before the United States entered the war, when Albert Einstein signed a letter to Franklin Roosevelt which explained the frightful military possibilities of nuclear fission. Fearing that Germany might be the first nation to realize those possibilities, Roosevelt authorized a program of nuclear research. By 1943 the Manhattan Project, or S-1, as it was also known, was consuming more than \$50 million a month in a frantic race to develop a nuclear weapon before the Germans did.

As it happened, the Germans never did build an atomic device of their own. In a poignant irony, the first meeting of the Interim Committee, appointed by Stimson in early 1945 to advise "on the various questions raised by our apparently imminent success in developing an atomic weapon," took place on May 9, 1945, the day after the German surrender. If the bomb was to be used at all, it would be against Japan.

Contrary to much folklore and some revisionist historical accounts, the Interim Committee did not agonize over

the decision to drop the bomb. As Truman later wrote, "I regarded the bomb as a military weapon, and never had any doubt that it should be used." Henry Stimson did not dissent from that view, nor did any other influential official in the highest reaches of the American government. The decision to make military use of the bomb was deeply implicit in the decision to build it, and was never seriously questioned.

**W**HAT WAS OPEN to question in 1945 was the bomb's place in the overall architecture of America's end-of-war and postwar strategy, especially respecting the Soviet Union. Stimson was one of the few persons to give that matter serious thought. On the last day of 1944 he had called at the White House, found Franklin Roosevelt still abed at noon, and presented his views. The two men, one enervated by illness and the other by age, wearily agreed that, in Stimson's words, "it was essential not to take [the Russians] into our confidence [about nuclear technology] until we were sure to get a real *quid pro quo* from our frankness." Such as it was, that vague principle constituted American nuclear diplomatic doctrine as the war approached its climax.

Other men had different views. James Byrnes, soon to be Truman's Secretary of State, held sketchy but assuredly bellicose ideas about somehow threatening the Russians with the bomb. George F. Kennan, still at his diplomatic post in the U.S. embassy in Moscow, doubted that Stalin would conduct any negotiations in good faith. Navy Secretary James Forrestal regarded the bomb as American property, bought and paid for, and not to be disposed of under any circumstances.

These opinions were vociferously aired at Stimson's last Cabinet meeting, which Commerce Secretary Henry Wallace called "one of the most dramatic" he had witnessed in his fourteen years in Washington. The meeting took place, fittingly enough, on Stimson's seventy-eighth birthday, September 21, 1945, and was partly designed as a farewell. After some pleasant ceremonies the old warrior, speaking extemporaneously, made the points he was to make many times over in the remaining years of his life: that the bomb was the "most terrible weapon ever known in human history"; that

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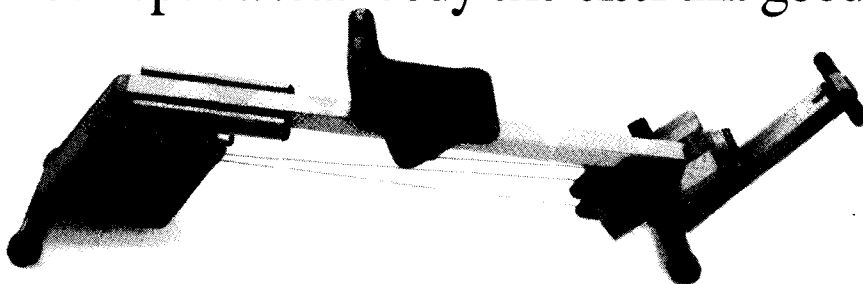
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it placed a special moral responsibility on Americans; that it touched "matters which are deeper even than the principles of present government"; that it defined "a new relationship of man to the universe"; that its existence would take policy-makers "right down to the bottom facts of human nature." For all these reasons, Stimson pleaded, the United States and Britain should enter immediately into an open, collaborative relationship with the Soviet Union which would forestall a nuclear arms race. "The advantage of being ahead in such a race," said Stimson's sometime ally on this question, Dean Acheson, "is nothing compared with not having the race."

Hodgson renders Stimson's proposals on voluntary nuclear sharing as a sharp change of mind, occasioned by a heart-attack-induced accession of high-mindedness, from the *quid pro quo* bargaining strategy that he recommended to Roosevelt on New Year's Eve, 1944. But that judgment both overestimates the formality of Stimson's discussion with Roosevelt and exaggerates the difference in the two positions. They were, in the end, but two of several contributions—among the most enlightened contributions, to be sure—in the general groping to make moral sense and proper diplomatic use of the fearsome new power of the atom.

For the most part, Stimson's colleagues on that September afternoon in 1945 were unmoved by the old man's eloquence, and the Cold War, turning especially on competition in nuclear armaments, proceeded to cast its chill shadow over the next four decades. But Stimson's finest hour in the service of his country was, literally, his last. At that moment Colonel Stimson did not lack for the needed imagination. And the wellsprings of that imagination lay deep in the Victorian sensibility that many of Stimson's younger, tougher colleagues, the men who would administer American foreign policy in the Cold War, thought to be ludicrously and dangerously old-fashioned. It would be many years, Hodgson ruefully notes, "before anyone in Washington could have suggested what Stimson proposed at his last Cabinet meeting without being suspected of dementia."

Those many years have now passed, and Stimson's wisdom on nuclear poli-



cy, and on international relationships, is finally in the ascendant. His appeal has always been to believers in a supposedly bygone world of simple creeds and stable values, a world in which gentlemen did not read each other's mail, in which men and nations dared to trust one another, in which peoples did not sour on their adversaries in perpetuity. Until recently, longing for that world was thought to be an exercise in hopeless nostalgia. This sensible and timely book modestly suggests that in some important respects that world might not be irretrievable after all. □

## Moving Backward, Fast

by Geoffrey Wheatcroft

AFRICA: DISPATCHES FROM A  
FRAGILE CONTINENT  
by Blaine Harden.  
Norton, \$22.50.

**W**HAT WENT WRONG with Africa? Thirty years ago, when the process of decolonization was gaining speed, everyone had the highest hopes. Soon, it was supposed, several dozen new nations, unshackled from imperial exploitation, would come into their own. This was to be the age of Africa. A French magazine began with the exhilarating title *Jeune Afrique*. An English journalist, then as now a Conservative, was so excited by the independence of Ghana in 1957 that he planned to write a book called *Democracy in Africa*, after Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Another Tory, the English Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, announced in 1960 that a "wind of change" was blowing through Africa.

An ill wind it has proved to be. In the three decades since, the world has seen war and famine and tyranny, but on balance the period has been a success. That is notably true of the advanced West, but true also, to varying degrees, of what is now ceasing to be the communist bloc, and of much of the misleadingly and tendentiously

named Third World. Africa is the striking, shocking exception. As any honest account of the continent, like Blaine Harden's fascinating book, must make clear, Africa is not just a story of failure but a tale of almost unrelieved disaster. Economically and socially, Africa is not merely standing still, it is moving backward, and fast.

To take just one country, Zambia has seen its per capita income fall by a third in the past ten years, and its rate of infant mortality through malnutrition double. Zambia is one of the countries for which hopes were highest at the time of independence, and not without reason. It had been well enough ruled (as Northern Rhodesia) by the British; it had considerable natural resources, in the Copperbelt; it had a small, enthusiastic black middle class, including Kenneth Kaunda, who has now been the unfortunate country's President for a quarter century.

Harden describes Zambia in his book, which grew out of his years as a *Washington Post* correspondent in Africa. He was based chiefly in Nairobi, and Kenya receives more coverage than any other country. But from there he visited north, south, and west: Sudan, Zambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Zaire. His dispatches begin with a gruesome description of a voyage by riverboat down the Zaire, or Congo, River. This was Conrad's Heart of Darkness. During the rubber boom and under the rule of the loathsome Leopold II of Belgium, the Congo was treated more shamefully than any other African country was by any other Europeans.

Today Zaire staggers downhill under a different kind of burden. Leopold bled the Congo dry for his personal profit, but he could have taken lessons from President Mobuto, whose private fortune is reckoned to be around \$5 billion, and who, at least in part through the efforts of the well-connected Republican lobbying firm of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly and of certain Democratic congressmen, receives more than \$50 million in American aid every year. He is only the most drastic example of a phenomenon that Harden examines in some detail. Personal rule by a Big Man has been the experience of most independent African states.

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His photograph hangs in every office in his realm. His ministers wear gold pins with tiny photographs of Him on the lapels of their tailored pin-striped suits. He names streets, football stadiums, hospitals, and universities after himself. . . . He insists on being called "doctor" or "conqueror" or "teacher" or "the big elephant" or "the number-one peasant" or "the wise old man" or "the natural miracle" or "the most popular leader in the world." His every pronouncement is reported on the front page. He sleeps with the wives and daughters of powerful men in his government. . . . He scapegoats minorities to shore up popular support. He bans all political parties except the one he controls. He rigs elections. He emasculates the courts. He cows the press. He stifles academia. He goes to church.

That sour, bravura paragraph comes at the beginning of a chapter titled "The Good, the Bad, and the Greedy." If Mobutu is the greediest, the late Master Sergeant Samuel Doe was the most grotesque. Harden was banned for life from Liberia by its dictator and must have taken some quiet satisfaction from Doe's deposition. Satisfaction maybe isn't the word for American taxpayers, whose government heavily subsidized Doe, but they might like to ask the State Department what it thought it was up to. In contrast, President Kaunda is neither wicked nor personally rapacious. He is

just a hopeless incompetent, letting his country slide deeper into the pit while he mouths rhetoric about humanism and Third World solidarity. (It was one thing to secure the release of the British nurse Daphne Parish from her prison in Iraq last July, another to praise fulsomely "my brother" Saddam Hussein.)

For all Kaunda's personal honesty, his Zambia illustrates one part of the vicious circle that, according to Harden, personal rule often entails: food shortages, unemployment, and repression. Africa has become better and better at producing babies as it has gotten worse and worse at growing food. There is a steady flow of people from country to town. In Zambia, as in many countries, food prices are kept artificially low to please the urban population—the army, the state payroll, the mob—on whose acquiescence, if not enthusiasm, the Big Man depends. Low food prices ensure that still less food is grown. The Big Man buys off trouble in conventional fashion. Zambia has 76,000 civil servants, nearly twice as many as its neighbor Malawi, which has roughly the same population.

Everywhere corruption eats like a cancer through the political economy. This is not simply an issue for prim Protestant morality. Corrupt as they are, many African countries are probably no more so than England in the eighteenth century or the United States in the nineteenth. The difference is that while those countries were

rising to economic power, graft might not have done much harm and might even have oiled the wheels. In Africa today graft is sand in the engine.

The bigger the "development" project, the more it costs, and the more scope there is for kickbacks, reckoned by some hardheaded businessmen to represent at least 10 percent of the budget of any deal in Africa. And over and over again, the wrong things are built in the wrong places. Harden chooses an epitome of this. The story of the Turkwel Gorge Dam, in northern Kenya, is told in what is in some ways the most depressing chapter of the book, which contains also some bleak reflections on the value of "aid." Apart from its potentially disastrous social and ecological repercussions, the dam may well end up producing electricity more expensively than could be done by diesel generators.

Again, what went wrong? Even the question makes us twitch with awkwardness and guilt, because it raises the possibility, albeit repressed out of conscious view, that there might be something wrong with the Africans themselves that explains the failure of independent Africa. We tend publicly to dismiss such an explanation in an a priori way, and we are, in my view, right to do that, because the explanation is indeed wrong.

**T**HERE IS A simpler explanation than inherent black inferiority: the cruel and grotesque trick that Europe played on Africa. It began with colonization, the scramble for Africa. We are speaking here of what is sometimes called black Africa, an inelegant phrase at the least (after all, we don't call China "yellow Asia"). Better would be to call it tropical Africa, which is an exact description of the bulk of the continent between the Arab countries of the north, with their fortuitous oil wealth, and South Africa, with its undeserved mineral wealth.

Since the partition of tropical Africa it has been generally if vaguely assumed that the partition had an economic motive. The truth is different. An iconoclastic historian once said that although the enormous areas of tropical Africa look tempting on a map, the truth is that they remained so long unowned by European powers because they were not worth owning. Even today, if you take away the oil of Nigeria

—the one brightish spot on Harden's map—the resources and economic product of Africa are trivial by Europe's standards.

Having discerned that Africa wasn't after all such a lucrative field for exploitation, Europe gave the Africans whom it had conquered a cursory swimming lesson in democratic government and economic management, and then dropped them in the deep end. Most countries had peasant masses and a small group of university-educated political enthusiasts, who became the new rulers. There was no one in between, no "non-com" class, on which modern societies depend. Today what Harden calls the missing middle remains a desperate problem.

The nation-states of Europe and Europe's offshoots, and their industrial economies, are the results of centuries of slow and painstaking growth. In retrospect, it was absurd to suppose that at the click of fingers they could be replicated throughout Africa after the brief sojourn there of the European imperialists. Africa would surely be better off today if the colonial powers either had remained for another generation or had never gone there in the first place. As it is, Africa has had the worst of all worlds. Another specific, and calamitous, legacy from the time of decolonization is political. Most anti-colonial rebels belonged by definition to the left; most newly independent countries adopted some form of socialism, at least in name. The results can be seen everywhere, and lamentable examples are sprinkled throughout Harden's book. He might have taken a text from Conor Cruise O'Brien, himself a lifelong man of the left, who was caught up in the exalted atmosphere of African independence thirty years ago. O'Brien not long ago observed that

not all the capitalist African states have been successful, but all the (relatively) successful states have been capitalist. "African socialism" has no success stories to tell. I say this not because I wish to make a fashionable Reaganite point, but simply because it is true, and important.

It is very important indeed, and the question goes beyond the sterile debate of left and right. Anyone who knows (and likes) the continent is bound to wonder sometimes whether the state as an institution has done

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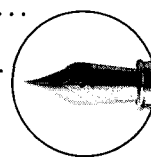
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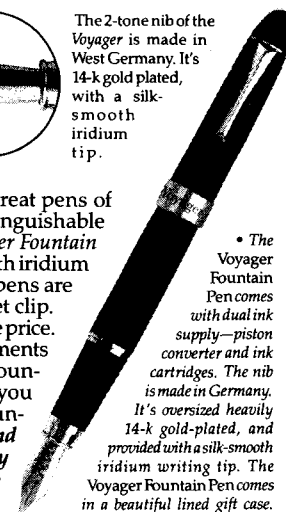
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post-colonial Africa any good at all. Harden senses this, and writes tellingly of "the folly of too much government." In Europe government grew symbiotically with advanced society, and brought benefits; in Africa government (or the pretense of government) has brought no benefits, only losses.

There is not much cause for optimism in Africa today, but maybe some. Harden closes his stimulating and sometimes profound book with a chapter on Nigeria: huge, sprawling, noisy, disorderly, stinking—"it might be impossible to exaggerate the horribleness of Lagos." In the words of Nigeria's greatest writer, Chinua Achebe, it is "one of the most corrupt, insensitive, inefficient places under the sun . . . among the most unpleasant places on earth!" And yet, after a fashion, it works. Not long ago Nigeria looked

like the epicenter of African disaster. The vast inflow of petrodollars in the 1970s and early 1980s was blown like a gambler's winnings, on luxury imports and on enough shiploads of cement to build a city, which clogged up the harbors and in some cases sank in them. Having earned, if that is the word, \$100 billion in oil revenues, Nigeria was left with a foreign debt of \$18 billion.

Now Nigeria is sobering up. It has undertaken a serious program of free-market reform and left some other things alone to work themselves out. If anything is, this is the hope for Africa. Once upon a time Africa asked only to be left alone, and it was, and it worked. Now the Africans and the rest of us begin to see that the answer is once more to leave it alone. It just may work again. □

tures, well presented by Mr. Bierman, make exciting reading. One can wish, however, that the author had resisted the current biographical fashion of seeking homosexual inclinations in any male subject given to long travels without discernible female company, and doing so without any credible evidence for such a bias. Most readers are capable of drawing their own conclusions in such cases.

**FEMMES D'ESPRIT** by Kirsten Powell, Elizabeth C. Childs, and others. *University Press of New England*, \$19.95. "Women in Daumier's Caricature" is the well-illustrated catalogue of an exhibition at the Christian A. Johnson Memorial Gallery of Middlebury College. As the title implies, it is a feminist project. The authors point out, correctly, that Daumier's lively, mocking drawings of domineering bluestockings, neglected children, and bamboozled husbands represent all the conventional nineteenth-century objections to women's claims to personal independence and activity. They also trace the connection of Daumier's work to fiction and criticism of the period, much of which expressed the same hostility to women's ambitions. By excluding from consideration Daumier's larger, and more savage, body of caricatures of men, the exhibition and the authors do the artist less than justice, for it was not women that Daumier attacked—it was what he perceived as human folly. Much of that is still around, and the caricatures still bite.

**TRIBAL ASSETS** by Robert H. White. *Holt*, \$24.95. Mr. White reports on the means by which the Passamaquoddy of Maine, the Choctaw of Mississippi, the Ak-Chin of Arizona, and the Warm Springs Confederation of Oregon have developed profitable businesses on their reservations and escaped from total dependence on the erratic and often misdirected support of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The financial arrangements differ from tribe to tribe, are at times extremely complicated, and always require non-Indian legal and investment experts, either BIA help or BIA noninterference, and indigenous leaders determined to improve conditions. A cynic might complain that tribal leaders permit the exploitation of their people when they entice industries to their land by the

## Brief Reviews



**FAR AFIELD** by Susanna Kaysen. *Random House/Vintage*, \$9.95. Ms. Kaysen is a novelist who knows how to command instant belief. Her hero, Jonathan, is in the Reykjavik airport, while his baggage, according to a *dégagé* (and misinformed) clerk, is in Copenhagen. After that opening, no doubt is possible. One follows trustingly as Jonathan, an anthropologist, launches his study of Faroese culture without any of his accustomed Harvard props. As the only son of a pair of professors, he has been so thoroughly trained to the analytical and the intellectual that he is more a bystander in life than a participant. There proves to be no room for bystanders in the Faroes. Jonathan must deal with recalcitrant plumbing, wilderness sheep-chasing, and bloody whale slaughter, as well as sly Faroese humor and the alarming local cuisine. The ups and downs of Jonathan's relations with the Faroese—all so solidly characterized that they seem physically present on the page—and the unexpected private insights to which his experiences lead constitute a novel distinguished for intelligence, psycho-

logical insight, and splendid writing. Ms. Kaysen has, among her other merits, nerve. Having labeled northern lights indescribable, she proceeds to describe them with brilliant success.

**DARK SAFARI** by John Bierman. *Knopf*, \$24.95. Henry Morton Stanley, remembered, to his considerable chagrin, as the man who presumed it was Dr. Livingstone, was the son of a Welsh minx named Betsy Parry and a village drunk named John Rowlands—or possibly of some other man entirely. Neither—or none—of these parents cared a hoot about the boy. His adult identity was entirely his own invention, and according to his biographer "even in late middle age, full of honors," he "continued to concoct pathetic lies and Mitty-esque fantasies" to compensate for the emotional deprivations and social humiliations of his youth. Eccentric mendacities aside, he did much more than locate Livingstone. He was an indefatigable explorer whose prowlings in Central Africa provided valuable information about that then unmapped area and whose adven-

promise of cheap, nonunion labor. A tribal chairman would reply that low salaries are balanced by a high level of public services in health, housing, education, and anything else community members need. Mr. White's interviews with Indian authorities produce numerous quotable lines, the most pertinent from a Navajo who observed, apropos concern about the possible loss of traditional values, "Traditional Navajo values do not include poverty."

**I LOCK MY DOOR UPON MYSELF** by Joyce Carol Oates. Ecco Press, \$17.95. The publisher announces this short novel as "the first in a series of fictions on art." Without that information the work can be seen as a study of alienation, the story of a young woman unable to adapt to the social expectations of her time and place—which happen to be upstate New York at the turn of the century. She simply declines to be mentally present in the world in which, physically, she lives, until she finds means to escape with a Negro

dowser. Her actions are reconstructed by her granddaughter, moving her conduct yet another step away from realistic contact. Is it all a parable of the artist's position as an observer and interpreter of society? Is it an illustration of how a writer constructs a coherent story out of disjointed events? Either way, it provokes thought.

**SAYONARA, MICHELANGELO** by Waldemar Januszczak. Addison-Wesley, \$16.95. The author is the arts editor for a British television network and formerly the art critic for *The Guardian*. He does not write like an art critic. Fanciful, witty, irreverent, and jargonless, he examines the cleaning of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes, a process that has thrown reams of gloomy psychological interpretation into disrepute by revealing sparkling color and humorous detail. In addition to dismissing Michelangelo the Tortured Genius, Mr. Januszczak whisks through a history of the chapel itself, considers several movies, deplores Da Vinci's experimental fresco technique in *The Last*

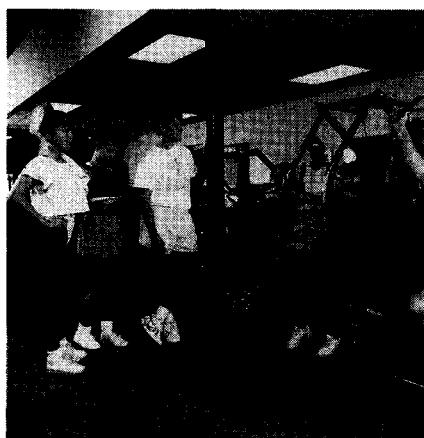
*Supper*, and discusses the Japanese invasion of the European art market. For the Vatican that invasion took a useful form. Nippon TV paid several million dollars for the restoration of the Sistine ceiling, in return for exclusive media rights to the process and the result.

**LONGSHOT** by Dick Francis. Putnam, \$19.95. Mr. Francis has created a teasingly backhanded version of the country-house murder mystery. Instead of a group of logical, reasonable suspects, he provides an assortment of well-defined characters all of whom seem, for reasons of temperament, situation, or ability, quite incapable of the killing in question. It is enough to drive a reader mad.

**THE FIREMAN'S WIFE and Other Stories** by Richard Bausch. Simon & Schuster/Linden Press, \$18.95. The title story of this collection first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

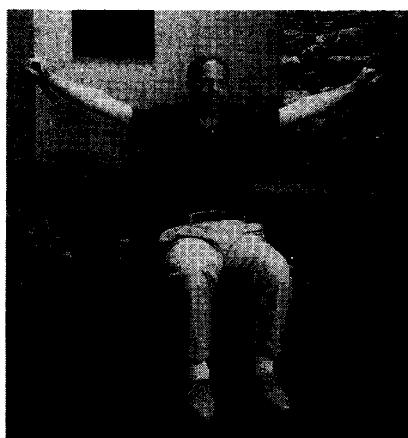
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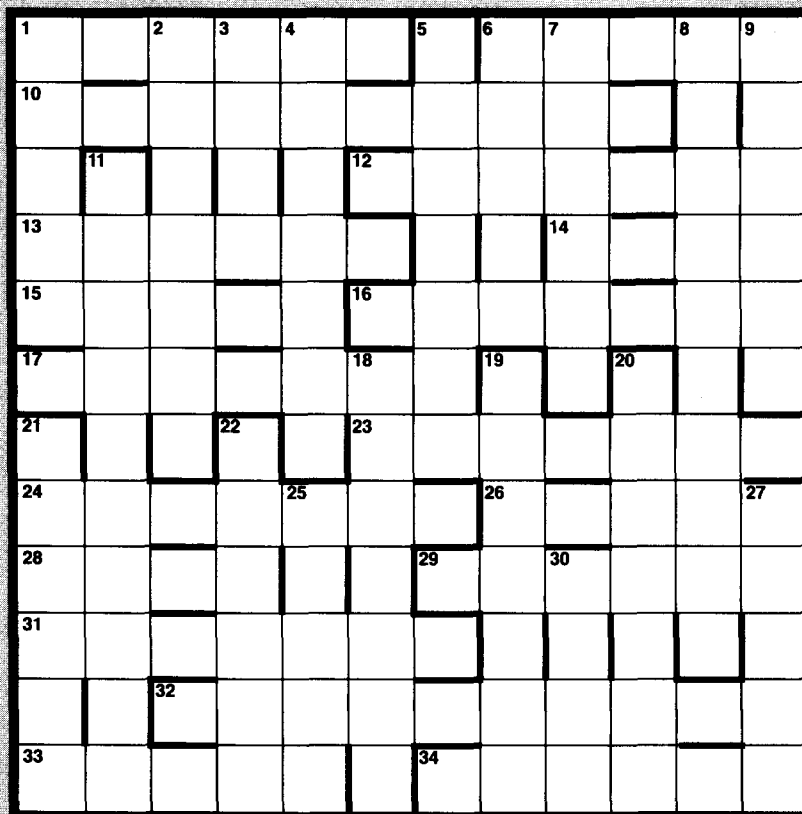
# THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

## TRAPDOORS

Solvers, beware! This puzzle's diagram contains some "trapdoors," unmarked squares at the intersection of two answers. When an answer lands on a trapdoor, it will "fall" from that square and re-emerge from a different trapdoor on the next letter, going either across or down. For example, if ANSWER hit a trapdoor on its third letter, it would be entered as ANS, and WER would emerge from a trapdoor elsewhere in the diagram; every trapdoor is both an exit and an entryway. Because of the trapdoors, some answers may not fit their apparent locations in the diagram; hence the lengths are not given. By marking all the trapdoors, solvers can highlight an appropriate term reading from left to right and top to bottom. Answers include six proper words.

*The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 168.*



## ACROSS

1. Regressive boor owns country homes
6. Scum in back of sled with polar explorer
10. Invoice ultimately features balances
12. Bar headwear outside for naught
13. Roman god Dutch painter draws up
14. Garland assumes victory for leader of a tribe
15. Archer rejected some of nonpareils
16. Bush pronounced rocket "drag"
17. Solicit painting by South
23. Some type of list CIA circulated
24. Count accepts girl as a queen
26. Dividing drink, saint shows fairness

28. I was in charge of a country
29. Minnesotan woman's behind the Republicans
31. Stick to first of saddle horses
32. Forecasts wrong hoops score
33. Goaded and pelted with food
34. Take a chance admitting dope dog

## DOWN

1. Holds party for liberals around the seventh of November
2. Enclosure among dishes with hot seasonings for breads?
3. Prince with cipher ring
4. Loser steals oranges, peeled (hyphenated)
5. Advocate of central planning working at it aboard transoceanic jet
6. Before *Cheers*, lower antennas
7. Flying around, let Ray land
8. Cutting organ in rat
9. Spring's beginning with a chill for part of Italy
11. Discussing fence around state
18. Element 51's reversed symbol
19. Killer whale following pack back to island
20. Latin fellow's fear
21. Baloney sandwiches left with three members
22. For audience, cloak shelf above a fireplace
25. Iodine swallowed by fat Scottish aristocrat
27. Tackle corrosion with confidence
30. Occupy a chair after expert toast

**NOTE:** The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

# WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

## bonanza

A version of the 1990 Civil Rights Act that was passed by the Senate last July contained a provision that would allow women to seek compensatory and punitive damages from employers whom they believe to have discriminated against them on the basis of sex. Opponents of this provision claimed, among other things, that it would provoke senseless and costly litigation—a “lawyers’ *bonanza*,” as Senator Orrin Hatch put it. *Bonanza* has been a part of American life for well over a century. The long-running television series *Bonanza*, which por-



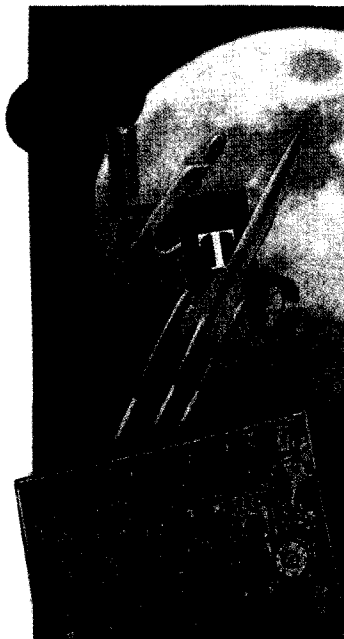
trayed a family working to maintain their enormous Nevada ranch, harked back to the *bonanza farms* of the late nineteenth century, where farming and ranching were done on a vast scale. These farms took their name from a term that re-

ferred to a very productive mine or a rich vein of ore (“Their successors no sooner struck a *bonanza* than . . . they commenced to enjoy life in pretty much the same manner”—Sylvester Mowry, *Aризона and Sonora*, 1864). *Bonan-*

*za* is a Spanish word meaning “prosperity” or “success,” and comes from the Vulgar Latin *bonacia*, meaning “fair weather at sea.” *Bonacia* was based on a misunderstanding of how another Latin word, *malacia*, meaning “becalmed at sea”—the bane of sailing ships—had been formed. *Mal-* in *malacia* was thought to be a prefix meaning “bad,” from the Latin *malus* (hence the “bad” weather of a calm sea). Thus *bonacia*, the reasoning went, would mean “good” weather, *bon-* being from the Latin *bonus*. But in reality *malacia* is a borrowing from Greek *malakia* (calm at sea), from the word *malakos*, meaning “soft.”

## glitch

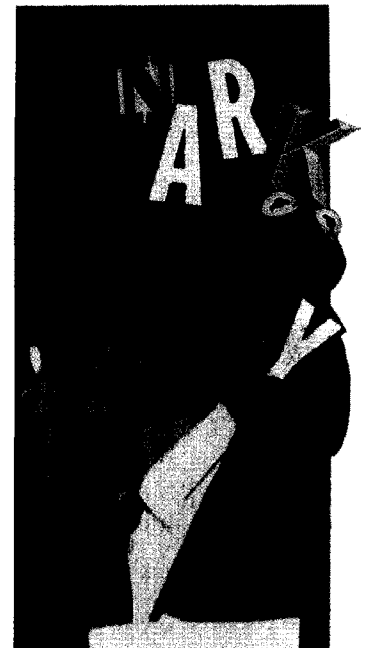
After Jesse Jackson announced that he would not run for mayor of Washington, D.C., some critics—and even some supporters—wondered whether he would ever get experience in elective office to burnish his credentials as a presidential candidate. Such experience, according to Bert Lance, who is a close adviser to Jackson



and was the director of the Office of Management and Budget under Jimmy Carter, “would remove the résumé *glitch*.” In the jargon of electronics and aerospace engineers a *glitch* is a sudden surge in an electric current or signal. It is probably a borrowing of the Yiddish *glitsh* (a slipping), which is, in turn, from the German *glitschen* (to slide or slip). Because a sudden change or “slipping” in the electric current in a computer or electronic system can cause serious problems, *glitch* quickly came to mean “a mishap or malfunction,” a meaning that was probably reinforced by *hitch*. (Something *hitches*, or moves in a jerky, discontinuous manner, when its progress is impeded or it becomes entangled; *hitch* eventually became associated with the impediment itself.) Astronauts in the early 1960s adopted *glitch*—the earliest occurrence in print is in a quotation from John Glenn—and popularized it in its extended sense, “a malfunction or snag.” *Glitch* has held on to its technological orientation. Its newest sense is astronomical, and refers to a sudden change in the speed of rotation of a celestial body.

## snarky

“I suppose that he’s an alter ego,” Jim Henson, who died last May, once said of his best-known Muppet, Kermit the Frog. “But he’s a little *snarkier* than I am—slightly wise. Kermit says things I hold myself back from saying.” In Britain to be *snarky* is to be irritable or short-tempered. In America *snarky* has also been slang for “elegant” or “stylish.” *Snarky* is probably from English dialect’s *to snark* (“to fret, grumble, nag,” which in turn is from the earlier sense “to snore or snort”). Ultimately it is from a Germanic word such as the Swedish and Norwegian *snarka* or the German *schnarchen* (to snore), which are probably imitative of the sound of snoring. (The *snark* that appears in Lewis Carroll’s mock-heroic poem “The Hunting of the Snark” is an unrelated coinage: this imaginary animal is a portmanteau of *snake* and *shark*.) *Snarky* may have been influenced or reinforced by the British slang *narky*, “ill-tempered, irascible,” which may be from *nark*, referring to an unpleasant, quarrelsome person, in an extension of the earliest meaning “an informer”



or “one who watches.” (“If it was thought we were coppers’ *narks* it could endanger the lives of our film crews”—*London Times*, 1975). *Nark* may be from the word *nak* (nose) in Romany, the language of the Gypsies. This *nark* is unrelated to the American *narc* (from *narcotics*), a term from the world of drugs which refers to a narcotics officer or a police officer.

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